

THE DYNAMICS OF INTERAGENCY COOPERATION PROCESS
AT PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM IN
OPERATIONS ISAF AND ENDURING FREEDOM

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ABSTRACT

THE DYNAMICS OF INTERAGENCY COOPERATION PROCESS AT
PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM IN OPERATIONS ISAF AND
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The interagency cooperation process at provincial reconstruction team level in Afghanistan is assessed and analysed through Literature review and oral history interviews. The aim is to examine deficiencies and find possible solutions in order to improve the effectiveness of the PRT. In the conclusions the author delineates areas of concerns at the three different levels of war, provides possible solutions to the issues raised by literature and during individual interviews. In the recommendations the author delineates possible future areas of further investigation, specifically a deeper and broader presence of PRTs in the afghan territory in order to be more in contact with the needs of the local populace.

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ACRONYMS

AoR	Area of Responsibility
ARG	Afghanistan Reconstruction Group
CALL	Center for the Army Lessons Learned
CERP	Commander's Emergency Response Program
CORDS	Civil Operation Rural Development Support
DoD	Department of Defense
DoS	Department of State
IATF	Interagency Task Force
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
LL	Lessons Learned
MACV	Military Assistance Command Vietnam
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
RC-E	Regional Command East
RC-S	Regional Command South
RC-W	Regional Command West
UK	United Kingdom
US/U.S.	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The 'House' [a PRT] must have internal harmony [be in good working order] before it can expect to work effectively externally [and succeed in its mission]. Sound internal working comes before external results

— Fletcher Burton, Director PRT Panjshir 2005-2007

Background

As generally recognized by many sources, the evolving and changing nature of wars and conflicts in the international arena requires a strong cooperation between military and non-military agencies. The Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) is a joint structure where interagency cooperation is performed on a daily basis at the tactical level. It is the place where the doctrine and the general guidance leave space to the daily operations. The PRT is the field where the interagency procedures and coordination prove their overall validity, becoming effective.

The purpose of this work is to analyze the interagency cooperation process at the PRT level in Operation ISAF/Enduring Freedom Afghanistan, evaluate its effectiveness, find eventual deficiencies of the system and propose possible and applicable solutions to the raised issues. The focus is on U.S. led PRTs, but insights of the teams led by some other NATO nations are provided.

The typical U.S. model for a PRT has an average of 100 to 160 personnel: three or more are the civilians representing the State Department, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Department of Agriculture. The military component includes the PRT commander and his staff (including a Tactical Operations Center), a force protection unit (typically an infantry platoon of National Guard), two

Army Civil Affairs teams (Alpha and Bravo), each with one officer and three non-commissioned officers, a Civil-Military Operations Center, and several small units of military police, human intelligence officers and other specialists in logistics and contracting.¹ Not all U.S. and non-US PRTs have all these components. In Afghanistan, the U.S. handed over some established PRTs to NATO and Coalition partners (PRT Herat to Italy), who sometimes asked other countries to contribute with their own personnel and assets. As a result many organizational structures formed, each reflecting national preferences, agency guidance and functional solutions.²

In Afghanistan, as reported in many documents inherent to ISAF's civil-military cooperation, the PRT's mission is to help extend the authority of the Afghan government in the provinces in order to develop a stable and secure environment, enable security sector reform, and improve reconstruction, economic and social development. PRTs are located in provincial capitals where they interact primarily with the governor, provincial level representatives of the central government ministries and elected provincial councils.³ The PRT task is to help insure that the traditionally powerful local authorities promote economic development and the broad objectives of the central government, administer properly the institution and the funds and not pursue independent agendas.⁴

¹Center for Army Lessons Learned, 07-34, *PRT Playbook* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Government Printing Office, 2007), 56.

²Ibid.

³R. Perito, *PRT: Lessons and Recommendations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University, January 2008), 1

⁴Ibid., 2.

PRTs are led by multiple NATO countries under NATO/ISAF control and have evolved according to different environments. They vary in structure, size, and mission. Among current PRTs, three distinctive models stand out, according to a study promoted by Institute Woodrow Wilson, which is reported below.⁵

The US model, as mentioned before, has an average of 80 to 150 personnel of which 3 to 5 are civilians. It is led by a military commander; it has an emphasis on quick impact projects, and usually operates in the most volatile and dangerous areas.

The U.K. model counts 100 to 150 people of which around 30 are civilians. It is led by a civilian; they put an emphasis on local capacity building, and an ability to operate in volatile areas.

The German model has around 400 people of which 20 are civilians; it has a “dual-headed” leadership of one military and one civilian leader; they put an emphasis on long-term sustainable development, and operating in more permissive areas.⁶

“Using a variety of different models, missions, functions, and methods, PRTs start progress on reconstruction, security, and development in post-conflict environments, are part of a larger universe of responses to post-conflict challenges, and belong to an evolutionary process of civil-military relations and interagency cooperation.”⁷ That is why they have to be flexible structures, adaptable to the different environments and able to use the broad range of instruments available, both civilian and military.

⁵Ibid., 5.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., 6.

The security, reconstruction and development, and governance sectors require, according to a Wilson Institute's study, a broad and large base of capabilities that only an integrated civil-military structure can possess and provide to other civil and military organizations. Facing this need, the PRTs have a broad spectrum of capabilities that range from agriculture to commercial expertise, economic development, transportation, political counseling, education, sanitation, veterinarian medicine, healthcare and other sectors.⁸

The Army War College has characterized the contemporary operating environment (COE) as “volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA).”⁹ In such an environment, Colonel Koivisto affirms in his paper, “the necessity for effective interagency cooperation and coordination is paramount if the elements of national power are to be successfully integrated and applied jointly to assure victory and long lasting stability.”¹⁰ In Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), according to Koivisto, “the need for interagency operations is more evident because the Department of Defense and various other government agencies work daily, in conjunction with multinational partners, to implement national policy in governance, and reconstruction & development operations.”¹¹

⁸Ibid., 7.

⁹J. Koivisto, “Increasing Effectiveness of Interagency PRTs” (Research Project, Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 2007), abstract.

¹⁰Ibid., 1.

¹¹Ibid., 2.

The presence of different allied countries is an important added value which, however, makes the environment more complex and the cooperation more difficult. According to Koivisto, even though the need for effective interagency cooperation seems obvious and clear, there are rumors coming from Operation Enduring Freedom / International Security Assistance Force-Afghanistan Theatre of Operations that these relationships sometimes struggle or get worse. This is because of psychological mechanisms and processes that involve professional and personal prejudices, biases, lack of communication and sometimes ignorance.¹² It is important to understand if these statements reflect the reality or if such difficulties are not prevalent.

Purpose and Organization

First of all it is important to determine if these issues or deficiencies really exist. From this point we could understand if the negative effects of a lack of planning between the military and interagency organizations will also negatively affect the efficiency of the whole of government action. The purpose of this work is to determine if there are deficiencies. If deficiencies are found to be, the second step is to raise them. The final goal is to analyze them and to find proper potential solutions that could be used by PRT Commanders. To do so, the author defines a deficiency as critical through the personal experiences of some interviewees and some individuals that have published works on interagency cooperation. It is also important to explore and to analyze the interagency cooperation processes of other allied NATO countries, what issues they have faced, if they have, and the solutions they used to solve the problem.

¹²Ibid., 2.

The primary research question is focused on determining if there are deficiencies in the Interagency Cooperation process in ISAF (International Security Assistance Force-Afghanistan) Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

If deficiencies are found to be, the secondary questions statements are to determine if deficiencies affect the operational efficiency or the quality of PRT and in particular, how do these interagency cooperation deficiencies affect the PRT's main sectors and lines of activities. The last secondary question is aimed at determining possible corrections or solutions that may improve interagency cooperation.

The tertiary questions are aimed at determining the institutional PRT characteristics. Which are the main pillars of the PRT operations, which are its mission and organization, which are the components for a successful interagency cooperation and the responsibilities for the different components. This brings us to determine which doctrine exists for interagency cooperation within NATO allies and within United States Joint Forces.

Limitations

This study is limited by time constraints and the author's location of assignment. With regard to time, the author has had approximately eight months within which to study the problem, develop and conduct research, compose the monograph, and defend his thesis.

With regard to location of assignment, the author was located at 15 hours flying from the Afghanistan Theatre of Operation and was not able to physically assess the subject; last assignment of the author in Afghanistan has been completed in January

2008; all other research, to include communications with PRT members or staff, will have to occur telephonically or via email.

Additionally, the author had virtually no funding with which to study the problem. Finally, the author has very limited experience in conducting original research, as this will be his first attempt at a project of this size, because the theses presented at the end of previous studies were built on a different methodology.

Delimitations

In the study, the focus of the research about interagency cooperation is the PRT level. It is a very tactical level that does not include the mechanisms that take place at higher tiers. The general principles stated in some sources used in the literature review are only aimed at understanding the context in which the PRT is working and the guidance that drives the process in a broader way.

Beyond the scope of the work is the interagency cooperation process at a level higher than PRT and detailed consideration about the how to build a “whole of government” joint doctrine at the Strategic level. First of all, this work is not an assessment on how much the PRT is effective in current operations, but an assessment on how much the interagency cooperation process in the PRT is effective and how much this process affects the operations.

Assumptions

What the author believes will remain true after the completion of the work, is the evaluation of the interagency process and the recommendations on how to implement the cooperation, how to structure the different components of the PRT and what will be the

way ahead, particularly in supporting the new surge in Afghanistan mentioned by President Barack Obama during his address to the Nation at West Point, December 1, 2009.

Significance

The possible results of the work will be an assessment of the interagency cooperation process in ISAF PRTs, an indication of its implementation, a possible solution of how to structure the different civilian and military components and a proposal of the way ahead on how to organize and run a PRT in Afghanistan.

Author

Captain Mattia Zuzzi, the author of this paper, is a student of the Command and General Staff Course at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, in Class 10-01, as the Italian Military Student. He graduated from the Italian Military Academy in 1998, with further training as an Artillery officer. In 2003 he graduated from the Civil Affairs Officer course at the Special Warfare Center and School in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He has served in a variety of peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Kosovo, and combat operations while deployed twice to Operation Iraqi Freedom and once to Operation Enduring Freedom.

Summary

In this chapter the author reviewed all the issues that will be addressed during the study, from the research questions to the expected outcomes and contributions of the work.

The second chapter will address a review of the pertinent literature on the PRT and the interagency cooperation process. The chapter will describe the main publications

on the PRT, the guiding principles for interagency relations and the context in which the work is collocated, which is made principally by documents, surveys and other written studies.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The author used different products to review what is known already about the interagency cooperation process at PRT level in operations Enduring Freedom and ISAF.

The literature can be related to three different echelons: publications that doctrinally address the organization, mission and structure of a PRT; the guiding principles for the interagency cooperation over a broader context, not related to any specific level; the works that, following what has been written in doctrine and guidance, and trying to evaluate the results, address the quality of work in the PRT and the effectiveness of the interagency cooperation at different levels. The work is located in this last portion of the third echelon and in this way, as far as my research is developed, is the only paper made by a military professional on interagency cooperation at PRT level.

Doctrinal Literature

One of the most important publications is the *PRT Playbook 07-34*, written by the Center for Army Lessons Learned in September 2007, which can be considered the doctrinal reference of United States led PRTs. As a matter of fact, and as indicated in the paper, this document has not been cleared by the civilian government agencies that participated in the drafting process.

Reading the publication makes it clear it was written to address ineffective interagency cooperation during previous ISAF and OEF experiences. It clearly comes from the lessons learned from the field and the complaints of difficult relationships with the civil agencies. The *Playbook 07-34* defines the PRT as follows:

A provincial reconstruction team (PRT) is an interim civil-military organization designed to operate in semi-permissive environments usually following open hostilities. The PRT is intended to improve stability in a given area by helping build the host nation's legitimacy and effectiveness in providing security to its citizens and delivering essential government services.¹³

The *Playbook* 07-34 addresses interagency cooperation specifically in chapter 3.

It states that:

unity of effort requires coordination and cooperation among government departments and agencies, with NGOs and GOs, among nations in any alliance or coalition, and with the host nation. The Unity of effort in operations occurs vertically and horizontally for all organizations. Without unity of effort, the probability of success for any endeavor, not only the PRT, diminishes significantly.¹⁴

The difficulty of cooperation within the PRT, according to the first paragraphs of the book, is caused by the fact that the different co-located agencies have differing mandates and are normally comfortable with their own "modus operandi". This leads to potential frictions and different, if not competing, internal agendas.¹⁵ "If not directly addressed and managed by the PRT leadership and its higher management authority, the results may hinder the process, delay completion of objectives, or contribute to total failure of the mission."¹⁶ This last statement, used in the first paragraph of the 07-34, raises probably the most delicate issue of interagency cooperation: the leadership. In an

¹³Center for Army Lessons Learned, 07-34, *PRT Playbook* (Government Printing Office: Fort Leavenworth, 2007), 1

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶*Ibid.*

organization with different agendas, the answer to the question “who is in charge, who leads”¹⁷ is the most important and involves the most serious consequences.¹⁸

In fact, the integration and the cohesion of civilian and military efforts are crucial to the success of stability and reconstruction operations, but also vital for an internal harmonic and smooth functioning of the organization. The necessity of balancing between the military and the civilian components is related to the concept of full spectrum operations and the PRT focus on supporting the host nation’s government and the local populace through the stabilization and reconstruction efforts. According to Playbook 07-34, this support requires using and balancing the full spectrum of means of national power, from the measured use of force to the non-lethal efforts. In other words, the non lethal efforts are basically civilian-led programs, such as political, social, infrastructural and economic, in which the agencies may have a better technical expertise, while in the other hand the military forces have to provide the security without which the civilian efforts cannot be implemented.¹⁹

This is why, as the *Playbook* 07-34 states in the first paragraph, “effective PRT leaders have to understand the interdependent relationship of all participants. They have to integrate and harmonize their efforts to achieve unity of effort and coherent results. If competent civilian capacity is not available, military forces may be required to fill the gap.”²⁰ The *Playbook* also lists some important considerations that must drive effective

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

cooperation and unity of efforts in the PRT: understanding the roles and capabilities of U.S. Governmental Organizations (GOs), and host nation partners; they need to include other participants in planning at every level; they have to support civilian efforts, including those of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The PRTs finally have to conduct, facilitate, or participate in political, social, informational, and economic programs.²¹

In fact, the PRT is an interagency team and should plan as a team with functional, regional, and planning experts representing all the agencies active in the PRT. This is to avoid the tendency for each agency to perform separate assessments and then build separate action plans based on those assessments.²² Many factors, including institutional culture, personal expertise, rotation cycles, and separate reporting chains can push PRT members into different direction, avoiding the interagency coordination. But it is clear in the book that “without joint assessment, strategy, and implementation plan, the PRT will lack a common understanding of the situation, making it hard to agree on where resources should be focused and prioritize and integrate each agency’s efforts.”²³

According to the *Playbook* 07-34, flexibility of the asset requires that all the components of a PRT are adaptable to any situation, from immediate post conflict with no governance structure (PRTs will not act as a government structure) to an unstable but developed structure requiring assistance. This flexibility is essential for PRTs to be

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., 2.

²³Ibid., 16.

applicable across the full spectrum of potential situations that require interagency and multidisciplinary coordination and cooperation.²⁴

As stated in the *Playbook* 07-34, “Operational interagency guidance is the implementing glue between overarching strategic goals and local execution.”²⁵ This guidance delineates the separate agency areas of responsibility (AoRs) and ensures a common assessment and understanding that each line of operation or sector reinforces the others. Following a comprehensive approach, the guidance should tie national and sector development programs with the stability objectives and activities of the tactical PRT.²⁶

Although PRTs focus on the operational and tactical level the interagency nature of their structure and activities performs across many sectors (security, governance, and economy) that can affect strategic goals and must be aligned with corresponding US national and local sector efforts. Any discontinuity or gaps in these local efforts will produce difficulties in achieving unity of effort within the PRT’s AOR. Therefore, as an interface between different levels of war, the PRT plays an important role in refining strategic and operational guidance from higher headquarters, ensuring at the same time that the local tactical objectives are effective and aligned with operational and strategic goals.²⁷

This statement underlines the importance of the PRT as a bidirectional link between the long term strategic objectives and the tactical civil-military operations.

In terms of implementation of each agency’s guidance, the 07-34 states that the bodies active within the PRT are provided appropriate policies from their respective Headquarters homeland.²⁸ Depending on the shape and the size of the PRT, the group of

²⁴Ibid., 12.

²⁵Ibid., 13.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

relevant agencies normally includes the Department of Defense, the Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and others-- the Department of Agriculture and Department of Justice among all. In practical terms, “drawing on the integrated operational guidance developed at the embassy/joint task force level, each agency provides a framework for its PRT personnel to identify key issues, priorities, timelines, and possible measures of effectiveness.”²⁹ As a matter of fact, this agency interpretation and guidance is also the main cause of the misunderstandings and ineffectiveness of the organization. That is why, as stated in the 07-34, it is vitally important that the PRT leadership ensures “careful coordination and mutual reinforcement of the guidance coming in from multiple agencies.”³⁰ The leadership has also to report to higher headquarters in case of inconsistencies or difficulties. The PRT is an important “real time” check on interagency coordination at higher levels; “if differing guidance cannot be integrated at the PRT level, it may be indicative of disjointed coordination or planning at the regional or national level.”³¹

As easily drawn from figure 6-1 of the 07-34, operational guidance comes from the separate departments directly to the PRT. The different guidance may or may not be integrated and coordinated at higher levels. As a result, participating agencies maintain primary control of the capacity, programs and money they allocate to the PRTs because of their own administrative responsibilities.

²⁹Ibid., 14.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

To face this separated flow of resources and funding, “the Commander may elect to establish an executive steering committee to coordinate each of the agency’s reconstruction efforts within the country.”³² This committee, created sometimes upon initiative of other Coalition PRT Commanders within their respective units, serves as the mechanism to ensure that each participating agency’s guidance is coordinated. The PRT has two lines of authority guiding to it: the brigade combat team has force protection and sustainment authority over the PRT and an important role, to the Joint Task Force Commander, within the security sector.³³ But the authority for all other sectors of the PRT operations (mainly Governance and Development) is the Commander: he is the executive agent responsible for all reconstruction efforts within a territorial Area of operations, where he is often the principal United States Government (USG) representative.³⁴ The double chain of command and the primacy of the PRT Commander are clearly explained by figure “Lines of management” at page 24 of the Playbook 07-34. This is an evidence of the primary role of the military in the interagency cooperation process at PRT level in Afghanistan, for the United States. But it is also evident that this publication has been written by the military, under the DoD, and may not be recognized as guiding doctrine by the other agencies falling under different Departments.

As shown in the fore-mentioned figure, the level of integration of the participating agencies or nations at a PRT can be very complex and can also vary in a broad range from mere collocation to unity of command. In general, as a minimum grade of

³²Ibid., 22.

³³Ibid., 23.

³⁴Ibid., 23-24.

coordination, each PRT should try to achieve unity of effort through the creation of an integrated command group or an executive team, composed of the senior member of each agency or nation participating in the PRT.³⁵ The command group should be collocated within the PRT and have a highly consensual, shared and considered approach to decision making, by regularly scheduled meetings involving all members of the different agencies.³⁶

As stated in the 07-34 “the command group is responsible for taking top-level direction and, in combination with U.S. and host country national priorities, determining the PRT strategy to include approach, objectives, planned activities, and monitoring and evaluation systems to harmonize the diplomatic, economic, and military lines of operation.”³⁷

To be successful, “PRTs should become truly integrated civil-military structures, civilian-military partnerships, and not just military organizations with embedded civilian advisors or bifurcated organizations with two separate components (military and civilian) that operate separately from one another.”³⁸ This sentence focuses on how the interagency cooperation and integration is intended to be: it means that to ensure a proper integration, the PRT’s agencies should play as equals, “inter pares.” According to this, how the joint command faces the challenges present in volatile and insecure environments, significantly improves decision making; increases flexibility in a rapidly

³⁵Ibid., 24.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid., 24-25.

changing environment; greater involvement; and, therefore, a shared sense of ownership of the outcomes and improved quality of projects and programs. In the absence of an effective team, PRT activities tend to be dispersed, non linked to a wider comprehensive plan, and dominated by tactical concerns, particularly in areas of extreme political instability and unrest.³⁹

To summarize what reported in the paper, in order for the PRT model to be successful, civilian and military representatives must act as fully integrated partners, with coordinated activities to allow projects to benefit from each agency's contributive advantage. The lack of consultation increases the perception that the military has the lead for all activities in the area, while a PRT is most effective when both the civil and military components understand that they are complementary and work together as a mutually supportive bodies.⁴⁰

Ideally, PRT operations should be “informed, addressed and ruled by doctrine that clearly defines civilian and military responsibilities and delimitations. However, in the absence of any joint doctrine clearly defining respective duties, civilian and military members of the PRT must work to develop a shared vision and common understanding of their roles, organization, and mission.”⁴¹ As a matter of fact, this broad and largely interpretable statement is one of the few forms of guidance achievable.

Many coordination bodies are established to enhance effectiveness of PRT operations in Afghanistan. Key interagency decisions for U.S. PRTs within Afghanistan

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid., 47.

are coordinated primarily through daily meetings of the Afghanistan Interagency Operations Group. The group includes representatives from the Department of State (DOS), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Department of Defense (DOD), and other agencies delivering assistance. This formal interagency committee provides a uniform process for making and informing the President of policy-level decisions and for sharing information among agencies.⁴²

In Afghanistan, U.S. assistance is coordinated through the U.S. embassy country team, even though some funding processes, such as Commanders Emergency Response Program, can be performed at the discretion of the Commander. DoS and DoD created another body for interagency cooperation in fiscal year (FY) 2004: the Afghanistan Reconstruction Group (ARG). This group is based in the U.S. embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, and is a “non-traditional solution to a non-traditional challenge.”⁴³ As found in the Playbook 07-34, page 54, the ARG is a specially recruited team of senior advisors hired from the highest levels of the private and public sectors, who bring their expertise in reconstruction-related skills to the reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. The group reports directly to the U.S. ambassador and assists officials at the highest levels of the Afghan government, coordinating and advising their actions. These senior professionals provide an important strategic and private-sector perspective on the assistance and reconstruction efforts for Afghanistan which are given opportunities and high priority of expansion.⁴⁴

⁴²Ibid., 53.

⁴³Ibid., 54.

⁴⁴Ibid.

Another important doctrinal tool is the ISAF *PRT Handbook* Edition 3, dated February 2007: it is the doctrinal reference for NATO allies while operating under the Alliance's flag. This Handbook, according to the intent expressed in the introduction, provides guidance to those leading and working in PRTs to ensure a consistent and coherent approach to activities of promoting stability across Afghanistan. It seeks to ensure a set of common objectives and increased convergence between the activities of all PRTs.⁴⁵

From the Handbook we can draw the PRT mission statement. It is not only a definition of military origin, because it was agreed on 27 January 2005 as part of the PRT Terms of Reference by the PRT Executive Steering Committee (ESC) in Kabul, an ambassadorial-level entity chaired by the Minister of Interior that sets policy for all PRTs in Afghanistan.⁴⁶ The PRT mission statement, which has been incorporated into the ISAF Operational Plan, is as follows:

Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) will assist The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to extend its authority, in order to facilitate the development of a stable and secure environment in the identified area of operations, and enable Security Sector Reform (SSR) and reconstruction efforts.⁴⁷

According to the Handbook, the PRTs exist to “help the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan gain a monopoly over the use of force through an increase of legitimacy and effectiveness.”⁴⁸

⁴⁵ISAF, *PRT Handbook* 3rd ed. (ISAF Kabul:NATO, February 2007), Introduction.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 1.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*

Moreover the PRT, as indicated in the Handbook,

must utilize each component of national power - diplomatic, economic and military, to achieve this goal with an understanding that the human terrain will dictate which element has the lead in any given intervention. Every activity the PRT undertakes must be in support of stability. The PRT mission is complete when sustainable stability is achieved. At that time, the PRT can then be dismantled.⁴⁹

The end state, in other words, is the achievement of an auto-sustainable secure and stable environment in the Area of Operations of the PRT. There is a need to visualize a roadmap, a way ahead, to decisively implement this strategy. The real challenge on the ground -as reported in the Handbook- is

to unify fractured relationships, build confidence in the legitimacy of a central state and ensure that ongoing stability allows appropriate security sector reform and development to rollout from the urban centers. Direct outreach and dialogue with remote and insecure communities should encourage understanding of what macro processes are happening and increase ownership of change processes through strengthened local and district level decision making.⁵⁰

The direct aid, according to the Handbook, is also highly dangerous when used only to buy favor of local communities and not linked to broader processes and policies, and long term objectives. There is also considerable risk to developing central government programs that are culturally alien to tribal, marginalized and self-governed communities. Many times the perception of central government by the tribal communities is about something far away from the reality of daily life.⁵¹ This approach, according to ISAF's *Handbook*, demonstrates that:

⁴⁹Ibid., 13.

⁵⁰Ibid., 22.

⁵¹Ibid.

direct and well-targeted interventions utilizing economic, diplomatic and military power in extremely insecure districts contribute to enhanced stability. This is achieved through a careful process of outreach, facilitated by the military, which builds confidence and encourages dialogue about security in the area. The key is to ensure that military intervention, political dialogue and aid levers are mutually complementary and, critically, work in tandem with one another to enhance security.⁵²

The PRT structure and coordination bodies along the chain of command are articulated and stand as follows in the next paragraph, but may be repetitive of concepts already analyzed in the US Army Playbook. This is probably because the US Army Playbook 07-34 is the main source that ISAF officials used to build their Handbook.

The PRT Executive Steering Committee (ESC) is an ambassadorial/ministerial-level body, co-chaired by the Afghan Minister of Interior and ISAF Commander, which simultaneously provides guidance for and oversight of all PRTs in the country.⁵³ Its membership includes the ambassadors of all the PRT Troop-Contributing Nations (TCNs), potential contributing nations, the minister of finance, the minister of reconstruction and rural development (RRD), the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), the NATO Senior Civilian Representative (SCR) and the EU Special Representative. The ESC meets every two months and has begun in 2006 to endorse policy suggestions that give specific guidance on PRT support to security sector reform and to reconstruction and development. HQ ISAF provides general support and the secretariat to the ESC.⁵⁴

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid., 22-23.

⁵⁴Ibid., 23.

The PRT Working Group is a subordinate element of the ESC. Its role is to resolve operational issues, prepare the ESC agenda and prepare issues for decision. It meets every one or two weeks and is constituted with representatives from Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, UNAMA, ISAF and embassies. The Working Group is chaired by the Head of the PRT Section at Ministry of Interior, with UN Assistance Mission Afghanistan and ISAF serving as co-chairs.⁵⁵

According to the ISAF Handbook, a PRT must have an integrated command group, composed of senior military and civilian officials.⁵⁶ Using almost the same words of 07-34 (which probably derives from), the publication attests that the command group should be co-located and have a highly consensual and shared approach to decision making with regularly scheduled meetings involving all key members.⁵⁷ The Command Group is responsible, according to the Handbook, for acknowledging and translating ISAF top-level direction and, in combination and accordance with national priorities, determining the PRT strategy to include approach, objectives, planned activities, and monitoring and evaluation systems. It must write a campaign plan for the PRT consisting of an end-state, objectives and coordination between lines of operation.⁵⁸

Without an integrated command group a PRT will be unable to harmonize the diplomatic, economic and military lines of operation and will fail to act with unity of effort. In order to succeed, PRTs must become truly integrated civil-military structures, and not just military organizations with embedded civilian advisors or

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid., 25.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

bifurcated organizations with two separate components (military and civilian) that operate separately from one another.⁵⁹

The structure of a PRT is a combination of military and civilian elements.

Decisions on the size, nature and composition of each PRT are a matter primarily for the country providing the core of the PRT (the lead nation) in coordination with contributing states (partner nations) and other organizations.⁶⁰ Factors within the Province such as security situation, status of reconstruction, development, effectiveness of governance, institutions and essential services, the presence of other International Organizations and agencies will play a role in defining the specific manpower and functional expertise required of each PRT.⁶¹ “PRT organizational structure should be based on unity of effort, clear co-ordination and good communications.”⁶²

Even if flexible and modular, the structure of a PRT requires the presence of key leaders and the related responsibilities, as shown and reported in the figures at pages 25 and 26 of ISAF *PRT Handbook*. The structure of the PRT has been previously discussed in this chapter and the Handbook does not contribute with significant changes.

A third document has been issued very recently by the United States Institute of Peace and the U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute: it is the “Guiding principles for stabilization and reconstruction.” It does not address specifically

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid., 26.

the PRT, but it can be considered a good and broad reference from which to tailor and attain the PRT's work.

This publication stands in an environment where two Presidential Directives had addressed the same topic. In order to address the capacity challenge of interagency cooperation in the United States, the Clinton administration issued Presidential Decision Directive 56 (PDD/NSC-56) in 1997, the first U.S. directive to provide for whole-of-government planning and execution.⁶³ Eight years later, the Bush administration issued National Security Presidential Directive 44 (NSPD-44), another executive decision to enhance a whole-of-government response.⁶⁴

The introductory part of the Guiding principles is a true and candid analysis of the present situation. It is the part that interests this work and is divided into paragraphs. For comparison and as a matter of fact, the document, at paragraph 1.1, states that the U.S. and NATO countries militaries are equipped with doctrine that guides their decisions and actions. But in the other hand, “almost fifteen years after NATO troops helped build peace in Bosnia and more than eight years after entering Afghanistan, civilian agencies of the U.S. government and the other NATO countries still lack any specific and comprehensive strategic doctrine and guidance on Interagency cooperation.”⁶⁵

Introduction keeps going by stating at paragraph 1.1 that:

⁶³United States President, Presidential Decision Directive 56, *Managing Complex Contingency Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1997).

⁶⁴United States President, Presidential Directive 44, *Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2005).

⁶⁵United States Institute of Peace, *Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction* (Washington, DC: Peacekeeping and Stability Institute, 2009).

no guidance exists to inform decision makers at strategic level, operational planners, tactical units or practitioners who deploy from civilian agencies, to understand clearly what these missions are all about. In briefing and conference rooms, in forward operating bases and humanitarian compounds, those who are engaged in these operations are trying to understand what are the focus, the purpose, the way of combining different elements of National power.⁶⁶

The Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction, as an auto referenced role reported in the introductory chapter, paragraph 1.1, is an attempt to fill the regulatory gap and the vacuum of interagency doctrine left by decision makers in the main Capital cities of the western countries.⁶⁷ However, as an auto limitation described in the paragraph 1.2 “Caveats,” there are only very general “rules of the road” or “principles” that have risen from experiences in these missions and that the Guiding Principles try to be “at disposal of decision makers, planners and practitioners as they attempt to navigate through the new volatile and challenging environments.”⁶⁸

As a positive new contribution, the Guiding Principles manual is the first attempt to present strategic principles for all major activities in Stability & Reconstruction missions in one single book. It is aimed at providing basic indications and priorities for specific missions that may involve civil and military contributions.⁶⁹

Even if the principles are broad and clear, there are already many caveats and limitations that restrict its use, as stated in paragraph 1.2. First of all the manual has not been adopted officially by the U.S. government. It is just offered as a general and

⁶⁶Ibid., 1.1.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 1.2.

⁶⁹Ibid.

strategic tool. The manual is not intended to “replace agency’s doctrinal strategic guidance but is aimed at incorporating the major principles embedded in them and offering a comprehensive view of Stabilization and Reconstruction activities.”⁷⁰ It is also “a living document in need of revision as new lessons emerge and the gaps are filled.”⁷¹ This sentence, by addressing the filled gaps, brings evidence that deficiencies of interagency cooperation process exist, not only at PRT level.

The manual, as indicated in the “Methodology”, is a comprehensive review of major strategic policy documents from ministries of defense, foreign affairs, and development, along with major intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations (NGO). It was built through consultations with different agencies, reviewed by researchers and offered to the organizations involved for a veto option. It has been reviewed by a number of NGOs that are usually present in theatre before most missions deploy, during the mission, and after the peace is achieved.⁷²

As indicated in paragraph 1.4 “Scope”, the manual focuses primarily on “what the host nation and international actors are trying to achieve, not how they are trying to achieve it at the tactical level. It is not about how to conduct specific activities but about the outcomes that these activities support.”⁷³

As stated in paragraph 1.5, this comprehensive review intends to act as a milestone for S&R missions with the method of drawing and building upon what is

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid., Methodology.

⁷³Ibid., 1.4.

common and highlighting, for future developments, the areas of divergence. Authors affirm that “one area of divergence worth mentioning, and probably the most important, is the clear separation--both cultural and intellectual--between guidance focused on stabilization and peacekeeping (typically military) and the one written for long-term development (typically civilian).”⁷⁴ Again, according to the Guidance, the stabilizers (the military) need to understand what are the principles for a sustainable development, while the development community (the civilians) needs to understand how to apply conflict-sensitive approaches to S&R environments. The two sides have to perform an effort of empathetic approach.⁷⁵ Another area of divergence involves the terminology and the definitions. The multiple institutions working side by side in Stabilization and Reconstruction missions do not share either and are frequently accustomed to acronyms and technical jargon.⁷⁶

Perhaps the strongest point of convergence involves the major components of these missions, or what the U.S. government calls “technical sectors,” as reported in paragraph 1.5 with a reference to the DoS Reconstruction and Stabilization essential tasks.⁷⁷ Many agencies and frameworks working in Stability, R&D missions, address security, political, economic, social and justice sectors.

⁷⁴Ibid., 1.5.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷United States Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, *Post- Conflict Reconstruction Essential Tasks*, 2005.

This shared construct elevates to the level of strategic guidance in the end states. In fact the Guiding Principles manual finds accordance with US Army Field Manual 3-07 in indicating end states⁷⁸ and in translating the shared components into them: a safe and secure environment, the rule of law, stable governance, a sustainable economy, and social well-being. End states represent the ultimate goals of a society emerging from conflict.⁷⁹

These end states, as indicated in paragraph 1.5, “conform to the technical sectors currently used by the U.S. government: security, justice and reconciliation, governance and participation, economic stabilization and infrastructure, and humanitarian assistance and social well-being.”⁸⁰

Non Doctrinal Literature

For accuracy, the non-doctrinal portion of the literature is classified into different categories: the documents that talk about interagency cooperation at PRT level; those that engage broadly the process without addressing any specific level; those that talk about the PRTs and their effectiveness; those that address civil-military cooperation and finally those that are related to experiences of Allied countries. I will focus more on the first category. I will basically mention the main parts of the remaining documents. All the documents presented below are contributions made by different actors or agencies, aimed

⁷⁸Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-07, *Stability Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008).

⁷⁹Daniel P. Serwer, and Patricia Thomson, *A Framework for Success: International Intervention in Societies Emerging from Conflict, Leashing the Dogs of War* U.S. Institute of Peace (Washington, DC, 2008).

⁸⁰United States Institute of Peace, 1.5.

at answering questions about interagency cooperation and the PRT. They will be used as supporting elements to my conclusions and personal contributions chapter.

The first and most interesting document is the Congressional Testimony of Robert Perito, Senior Program Officer at US Institute of Peace, titled “The US Experience with Provincial Reconstruction Teams” dated October 2007.⁸¹ After a description of PRT’s organization, mission, national involvements and doctrine, the testimony goes directly to the point most interesting to this study. He believes that “beyond the mission statement, there is no agreement within the U.S. government or between the U.S. and its allies on how PRTs should be organized, conduct operations or what they should accomplish.”⁸² The decisions on priorities and programs reflect, on his opinion, “local conditions along with national priorities of participating governments.”⁸³ As an example he cites the territorial diversity: PRTs located in the relatively peaceful north and west of Afghanistan, conduct typical peacekeeping operations and emphasize economic development, and reconstruction of essential infrastructure. In the south and east along the border with Pakistan, PRTs are engaged in counter insurgency operations to counter the Taliban insurgency.⁸⁴

According to Mr Perito, PRT operations are strongly influenced by the personalities of the team members. According to him, PRT have a “bifurcated chain of

⁸¹R. Perito, *The US Experience with Provincial Reconstruction Teams, Congressional Testimony*, October 2007, <http://www.usip.org/resources/us-experience-provincial-reconstruction-teams-iraq-and-afghanistan> (accessed 1 December 2009).

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid.

command with the State Department in charge of political and economic issues and the military responsible for security and movement.”⁸⁵ He says that operational priorities often reflect the personal expertise and interests of team members and can change with the rotation of personnel. They also reflect the ability of team members to work together, compromise and adapt to each other on common objectives. With nobody in overall charge, according to Perito, the disputes are often referred to the most senior officials separating “stovepipes of authority.”⁸⁶ According to Perito, “given the limitations on PRT resources, even seemingly small decisions can be important”. As an example, since all movements off post require a force protection asset, the decisions on the availability and scheduling of security escorts can significantly affect the ability of PRT members to perform their functions, their duties and the scheduled appointments.⁸⁷

PRTs have also suffered, according to Perito’s opinion, from the inability of U.S. civilian government agencies, mainly DoS, to provide adequate quantity and quality of personnel. He affirms that:

the State Department has been able to fill its limited number of assigned slots, but has been forced to rely upon junior officers, retirees or civil servants, if not last minute hired contractors. Most USAID slots are filled with contract personnel who often have only a limited knowledge of their sponsoring agency and government regulations and requirements. Other U.S. civilian agencies have relied on random volunteers or have opted out entirely.⁸⁸

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid.

Continuing his analysis, Mr Perito reaffirms that the PRTs concentrate on three essential functions: governance, reconstruction and security (which are actually even ISAF pillars). He then starts describing the efforts in these sectors.

In Governance sector, Perito says, the PRT efforts to promote good governance have involved working and dealing with the provincial governor and police chief who are appointed by the central government. Moreover, in cases where these officials are competent administrators and support central government programs, PRTs have provided logistic and financial support. PRT commanders have escorted provincial governors on tours and have undertaken infrastructure improvement projects designed to reflect favorably on local authorities. In cases where local authorities are corrupt, involved in the drug trade or have their own agendas, PRTs have either been stymied or have used their influence with higher U.S. authorities to try to remove these officials.⁸⁹

In the Reconstruction and Development, as stated in Perito's testimony, the PRTs initially focused on quick impact projects designed to demonstrate goodwill and encourage a favorable local reaction to the presence of foreign military units in rural areas.⁹⁰ At that time, PRT projects, which were implemented through local contractors, were poorly advised, leading to constructions without a purpose or without the adequate personnel to run them, like the building of schools without teachers or clinics without medical personnel. The lack of long term approach and wide perspective in these efforts produced criticism from humanitarian and relief agencies. They argued that involvement

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid.

of soldiers in development violated “humanitarian space” and endangered the neutrality protection that civilian workers relied on for their safety.⁹¹

Over time, according to Perito, and particularly following the arrival of USAID representatives, “PRT projects conformed to provincial and national level development plans.”⁹² PRTs rely on CERP and a variety of other sources for development funding. Incrementally, the PRTs have tried “to use development aid to neutralize local sources of conflict and to provide incentives for Afghans to oppose the Taliban, without realizing that they operate in a larger humanitarian assistance universe.”⁹³ Moreover, he continues, the PRTs are responsible for “only a small percent of the U.S. assistance budget and have limited influence over projects that are supervised from the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, with which sometimes there is lack of coordination.”⁹⁴

As far as Security is concerned, Perito states that PRTs are part of and contribute to the security presence in their areas of operation, but they have no offensive capability and their only real security function is force protection. He reports that, in fact, PRT military elements provide convoy security for movements of PRT personnel. PRTs are co-located with U.S. and Afghan combat units on which they rely for protection from hostile forces. PRTs, continues Perito, “have no responsibility for counter narcotics or other types of law enforcement”. They can contribute to local security by funding

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Ibid.

construction of police stations and providing equipment, advice and limited training to Afghan police and military units.⁹⁵

The Congressional testimony of Mr Perito indicates also some interesting conclusions and recommendations to the several issues and deficiencies that have arisen so far. They are indicated below as they flow in the Testimony.

First of all, to him, improvisation in building an interagency cooperation process at PRT level is not a viable concept of operations: “PRTs -he says in the Testimony- need an agreed organizational structure with a single chain of command. This should be developed by involved agencies in Washington, vetted with the field and agreed with allies.”⁹⁶ Mr Perito thinks also that it is “unfair and dangerous to expect personnel from various government agencies and the military to agree among themselves on mission priorities, at tactical level, in the most difficult operating environments without any guidance from the top level.”⁹⁷

Then, Mr Perito argues, Stability Operations is not an environment for untrained, inexperienced and ill-prepared teams: “U.S. civilian agencies need to recruit federal employees with the expertise and skills required to staff a PRT in a dangerous area.”⁹⁸ In this way, Perito says, these permanent or active duty agency representatives can train and serve alongside their military counterparts and effectively represent their agencies. Mr

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Ibid.

Perito thinks also that it is not possible or effective to use commercial contractors or rely upon military reservists to staff civilian functions.⁹⁹

“Silence is not a public information program”, he says: according to Mr Perito, the U.S. PRT program suffers from a lack of public information on the nature, the functioning and results of its efforts.¹⁰⁰

Last but not least, and probably the most important evidence for this study, Mr Perito affirms that “without agreed objectives it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of this tool and its activities.”¹⁰¹ There is a need for an “agreed set of objectives for PRTs and an agreed set of metrics for measuring their performance”, says Mr Perito. “If means of determining whether PRTs are effective or not are absent, it is difficult to realize whether alternative mechanisms might better achieve the institutional PRT purposes: it is time, according to the Mr Perito, for some objective scrutiny measures of effectiveness.”¹⁰²

A very interesting point of view, because of civilian agency involvement, is given by a research document issued in 2004 by “Save the Children”, a British based NGO: “Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Humanitarian-Military Relations in Afghanistan”. The research was motivated by the organization because of their concern that PRT “represents a second-best option for enhancing security and blurs the distinction between

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Ibid.

humanitarian and military actors.”¹⁰³ It is an example of interagency cooperation with an NGO perspective. After having gone through the different perspectives and objectives of military and humanitarian actors, the document addresses the very delicate field of civil-military relations in Chapter 5 “PRTs and humanitarian-military relations in Afghanistan”. It is the part that interests this study. The chapter begins with an analysis of the challenges and opportunities associated with the PRTs: mostly a “forum for mediating disputes between rival militias, reducing conflict and supporting national institution that sometimes does not have the necessary strength to perform its duties.”¹⁰⁴ The chapter goes on to provide a conceptual framework to assist in analyzing the impact of PRTs on humanitarian access in Afghanistan.

One of the outcomes of chapter 5 is the lack of measures of effectiveness in place in ISAF or OEF in order to explore how effective the PRT is with respects to its activities.¹⁰⁵ The research states also that the PRTs have complicated relations with humanitarian agencies in Afghanistan, for several reasons: the non-adherence of certain (primarily US-led) PRTs to their ‘working guidelines’ concerning the performance of relief operations; the variation in roles and missions of the different PRTs, depending on lead country; the lack of consultation by some PRTs with local communities and Non Governmental humanitarian actors operating in the surrounding areas in advance of the

¹⁰³ Save the Children, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Humanitarian-Military Relations in Afghanistan*. London: 2004. http://www.rusi.org/downloads/assets/Save_the_Children_UK_-_PRTs_and_Humanitarian-Military_Relations_in_Afghanistan_2004_09.pdf (accessed 14 May 2010), Introduction.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 29-30.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 37.

arrival and deployment of the PRT; the relatively high turnover of personnel within the PRTs, which makes institutional learning more difficult and creates the potential for repeated mistakes.¹⁰⁶

Four possible modes of interaction for humanitarian agencies with the PRTs are then presented, providing advantages and disadvantages: principled non-engagement (no interaction); ‘arm’s-length’ interaction (only through UN agency); proactive, pragmatic, principled engagement approach; active, direct engagement and co-operation (identifying common projects).¹⁰⁷ The chapter concludes by identifying issues for further debate concerning the role and modus operandi of the PRTs: effectiveness of the PRT, not yet measured (a table with some measurable tools and indicators is provided at page 38 and 39), its added value, possibility to achieve consistency of mandate and strategy.

The interagency cooperation process inside the PRT, according to Save the Children’s point of view, makes a Governmental Organization sit under a military command structure without feeling compromised for two main reasons: first they are provided with essential military security; second, the association with the PRT gives agencies advisers “a greater clout with local institutions.”¹⁰⁸

A different perspective can be seen in a USAID document, dated June 2006: “Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan, an interagency assessment”. In October 2005, a team from the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the Department of State (DOS), and the United States Joint Forces Command, Joint Center

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 41.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 42-45.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 46.

for Operational Analysis (JFCOM/JCOA) assessed PRT operations in Afghanistan in order to generate lessons learned to inform better cooperation between different USG departments and agencies.

The assessment supported the conclusion that the PRT can be an effective political-military tool in the strategy to stabilize Afghanistan's remote provinces, helping extend the authority of the central government by providing technical and organizational support to governors and provincial ministries, delivering reconstruction and humanitarian assistance in remote areas and making significant contributions to security and to the effectiveness of Afghan National Police and Army.¹⁰⁹ Some other findings of the research were related to the following issues or considerations that can be considered pertinent to this research: the lack of explicit guidance led to confusion about civilian and military roles in the US-led PRT; the military commander of the US-led PRT needed to proactively incorporate non-DOD representatives into PRT leadership decisions or the goals of the PRT suffered; security in unstable provinces was improved by a combination of political, economic, and military efforts.¹¹⁰

These findings brought the committee to present a series of recommendations. Some of them are also pertinent and give important information for this study. According to the study, the US interagency community should "develop guidance that clearly outlines the mission, roles, responsibilities, and authorities of each participating

¹⁰⁹S. Morris, J. Stephanson, P. Ciminelli, D. Muncy, T. Wilson, and A. Nugent, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan, an Interagency Assessment* (Washington, DC: USAID 2006), 11. http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADG252.pdf (accessed 14 May 2010).

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, 12-20.

department or agency”¹¹¹ within the PRT: in the absence of broadly accepted guidance, says the assessment, the importance of personality, individual leadership style, and previously established relationships had influenced the effectiveness and impact of the PRT.¹¹² “In places where PRT commanders worked closely with the civilian and military team members, the PRT developed as a team with a common vision and sense of aligned purpose. In the other cases when the cooperation was not close, the PRT effort was fragmented.”¹¹³ Moreover, the assessment states that the US Embassy and CSTC-A should establish an in-country interagency coordinating body capable of articulating how national programs and PRT efforts fit into broader US foreign policy objectives in Afghanistan.¹¹⁴

Following the other findings and recommendations, a specific interagency guidance must direct the PRT leadership to incorporate non-DoD members into PRT decision-making process; a specific integrated management and information system needs to be strengthened; US Government shall develop team training for all PRT personnel; finally PRT assets and funding sources should be tailored to meet specific requirements.¹¹⁵

US Army Colonel John Koivisto gives a military point of view in his “Increasing Effectiveness of interagency Provincial Reconstruction Team” written as US Army War

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Ibid., 15.

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 17-18.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 20-25.

College Strategy research project in Carlisle, PA, March 2007. He recognizes that the PRT suffers from several deficiencies: ad hoc organization; unsynchronized personnel rotations; unenthusiastic support; inconsistent resourcing; and lack of detailed guidance on nationwide implementation of the provincial programs.¹¹⁶

His personal contribution refers to the conclusion that to be strong, PRTs have to be built as effective teams in accordance with the article “Developmental sequence in Small Groups” (Psychological bulletin 63 No. 6, 1965) written by Bruce W. Tuckman. Tuckman affirmed that groups evolve into teams through four stages: form, storm, norm and perform. Then in 1975 Tuckman added the adjourn stage, the one of dissolving the team after performance. Based on his research and that of others, Col Koivisto offered some recommendations aimed at demonstrating the need for an interim solution in advance of future institutional formalization of an interagency process.¹¹⁷

In his mind, PRTs should remain a diverse team of skilled personnel from government agencies involved in stability and reconstruction operations to take advantage of the skills, knowledge and characteristics. It will be important to identify personnel with experience in stability and reconstruction operations and these personnel should be monitored by their respective agency or department in order to facilitate rapid establishment of teams as required in the future. Moreover, Koivisto believes, reconstruction teams should be deliberately formed with consideration to leadership and they should be afforded with adequate time for team formation. Team members should all be held to the same deployment cycle to minimize disruption to the PRT. Following the

¹¹⁶Koivisto, 8.

¹¹⁷Ibid., 16-17.

operational employment of the team, PRTs should have an adequate period to “adjourn” in order to incorporate a data collection to capture lessons learned and knowledge achieved by the team. In addition to that, the PRTs should be separately funded from the lines of departmental budgets: funding sources should be centrally controlled and dedicated for PRT efforts in reconstruction and stability operations.¹¹⁸

One of the most interesting papers on the PRT is the “PRT: lessons and recommendations” published by Woodrow Wilson School in 2008 and supervised by Robert Perito. It includes also an analysis on Iraq PRTs. In the fall of 2007 nine graduate students from the Master’s in Public Affairs program spent time researching Provincial Reconstruction Teams, meeting with experts and academics that have studied and worked in PRTs, and conducting field research interviews. In addition to interacting with experts on the United States’ PRT experience, workshop members traveled to various countries to speak with representatives from government, NGOs, think tanks, and the media.

The purpose of the field research was to understand how each country had approached its PRT mission at strategic, interagency, and tactical levels. The workshop has collectively developed conclusions and recommendations to offer advice to the United States and other countries with PRTs on how best to utilize these organizations. The aim of the study was to discover if the country worth to keep running the PRT, if this tool is achieving results and what are the best practices used by the different nations to be successful. In the annexes, whose indications will be analyzed more in detail in Chapter 4, the authors reported the experiences of PRTs manned by Canada, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, UK and USA. Four sections cover the major issues arising from the PRTs:

¹¹⁸Ibid., 17-18

Politics and Bureaucracy; Civil-Military Relations; Activities and Relationships; and Evaluating Impact. The work concludes with recommendations taken from the most relevant action points of lessons gathered from research and interviews.¹¹⁹

Many outcomes of the paper interest this work. The first is that the “Whole of government” approach and integration between different agencies affects PRT operations. PRT planning and organization are impacted by presence or lack of a standing institutionalized interagency organization in the country’s capital. Countries that recognize the need for joint efforts by development, defense and diplomacy agencies have more success than others. In the same way if there is no interagency coordination in the Capitals, the PRT operations at the tactical level are negatively affected. Moreover small national bureaucracies and a common civil-military funding source promotes unity of efforts between the agencies.¹²⁰

“Civil-Military Relations” and their balance in the PRT (different personalities) influence operations (control of funding) and increase effectiveness of the Interagency approach (pre-deployment joint training). In this way a civilian led PRT balances the military short term approach with long term development.¹²¹

The sectors of Reconstruction, Governance and Security drive the activities and the relationship of the PRT. They make the integration with local institutions more

¹¹⁹R. Perito, *PRT: Lessons and Recommendations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson School 2008), 15-18.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, 7.

¹²¹*Ibid.*, 7-8.

effective, increase the interagency cooperation within the PRT and add value to the Security Sector Reform.¹²²

In terms of assessing the impact and the effectiveness of PRTs in Afghanistan, the paper says, there has been no systematic country-wide evaluation. There is the need of metrics to measure achievement of objectives and effectiveness of projects. By the way the personnel reports a positive perception of the efforts by the local populace. Moreover, the PRT becomes effective if part of a larger effort.¹²³

The “whole of government” approach should be strengthened through congressional appropriations, better funding under the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and more qualitative hiring of personnel.¹²⁴

The US and the international partners should establish and set common standards for PRTs and their composition.¹²⁵

The PRTs should be civilian led and supported by the military. Pre-deployment joint interagency training should be mandatory and standardized. Deployments should be synchronized across agencies.¹²⁶

There are other three documents that might interest this work. They are complementary and are aimed at establishing and measuring the effectiveness of the PRT as a whole and as a tool in Afghanistan.¹²⁷

¹²²Ibid.

¹²³Ibid., 15-18

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Ibid.

The first is “PRT in Afghanistan: filling the gaps in peace-building”, written by Professor Yuji Uesugi, at Hiroshima University. His thesis states that the PRTs have a lack of civilian capacities and resources as well as poor relationship with the humanitarian community. The Quick Impact Projects, he affirms, largely used as a tool to gain “hearts and minds” of local population, cannot be a substitute for long term development and cannot resolve the security dilemma. However, according to him, there are possible solutions: first, in order to increase PRT’s effectiveness it’s important to make a vigorous effort to implement the development in the Security Sector Reform; second, it’s paramount to advise local governance on public management practices. Even if not part of a direct action, these activities can contribute to the overall improvement of the Security pillar.

The second document is “Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: are PRTs a model or a muddle”. It is a research paper written by Michael J. Mc Nerney at US Army War College. On pages 44 and 45, which mainly are pertinent to this work, the author states that civilians in the PRT must have more authority and resources to play a leadership role. Moreover the interagency coordination has to be improved not at PRTs but at Government and Departments level in the city Capitals of the contributing nations. Finally, the measures of effectiveness should be established in order to evaluate the performances and the joint efforts in terms of civil-military relationships within the PRT and the capacity building results.

Third document is a US Army War College research project, “The search for stability: PRTs in Afghanistan”, written by British Army Colonel Russell N. Wardle. The

¹²⁷Ibid.

most important contribution to this work is given in his conclusions at page 14: as a positive finding, the author states that PRTs have succeeded in building trust at the local level, identifying need and bringing together resources in order to resolve issues, mostly related to the development of Quick Impact Projects. But in some cases, PRTs have showed deficiencies because they have lacked a full range of technical and management abilities due to a lack of interagency integration and cooperation. This means that the poor coordination has impeded the individual and collective technical capacities of the PRT to express their comprehensive potential.

Another portion of documents analyzed is related to the global interagency efforts and integrating instruments of power. They analyze how interagency cooperation is performed at different levels, without concentrating on specific areas. These general overview, even if not focused on PRT, might be of interest and may give a good oversight in terms of lessons learned and best practices realized so far.

First two documents have been published by the RAND Corporation. “Preparing the Army for Stability Operations. Doctrinal and Interagency issues” is the first. It describes organizational governmental tools to build an interagency collaborative capacity at strategic level. It also addresses the Army, inviting to draw from PRT experience in Afghanistan in order to create a template for NATO Allied Command for Transformation with standard elements, additional assets and a methodology for determining the skills and capabilities required.¹²⁸ It is an address to push the Army in the direction of issuing a doctrinal reference document.

¹²⁸T. S. Szayna, D. Eaton, and A. Richardson, *Preparing the Army for Stability Operations* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Arroyo Center 2007), xx.

“Integrating instruments of power and influence. Lessons learned and best practices” is another interesting document with good recommendations for the governmental agencies. The document, an overall recommendation to increase interagency cooperation at all levels, says that experience in Afghanistan has shown the need for more parts of U.S. government to be involved in foreign interventions in order to maximize the effectiveness of the U.S. power and influence projected into conflict situations. The U.S. military has usually taken the lead while the U. S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) often have been less involved than needed, mostly because of lack of resources. Other elements of U.S. government have been even absent.¹²⁹

At the end of the work, a recommendation states that there must be political will to make the necessary changes and to foster the interagency cooperation: political leadership at the top of the U.S. government--clear presidential direction and congressional support--along with adequate funding. Specifically there is need of enlarging the Department of State and USAID. Moreover, the document says that Congress should approve the necessary incentives and requirements for serving civilian officers in various U.S. government departments and agencies, along the lines of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, which applies only to the military.¹³⁰ This work is the only one that addresses the need for the legislator to rule at central level the interagency coordination and inter-operability like the

¹²⁹R. E. Hunter, *Integrating Instruments of Power and Influence: Lessons Learned and Best Practices* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Security Research Division 2008), 9.

¹³⁰*Ibid.*, 10.

Goldwater-Nichols act: this law forced the US Armed Forces to operate jointly and is considered the milestone of Joint Forces employment.

With regards to the PRTs, the suggestions are focused on improving its structure by creating a tailored asset, of a minimum size and with a joint interagency standardized doctrine, agreed by the major international actors.¹³¹

“Harnessing the Interagency for Complex Operation” is an exceptional document, even if dated in the second part of 2005. It analyzes existing interagency processes at Strategic, Operational and Tactical levels and then proposed efforts for the future. It also describes the known models for interagency cooperation and coordination of stabilization and reconstruction operations, those which actually exist and those which are in various stages of concept development and implementation.

At tactical level, the analysis is focused on the PRTs. The major recommendation is related to the deployment of Advance Civilian Teams (ACTs): an ACT Integration Cell should early deploy and co-locate with the military Joint Task Force headquarters to form the core of the permanent civilian Stability and Reconstruction presence. Another option is to establish an Interagency Task Force (IATF) to achieve greater unity of effort in interagency operations in the field. The IATF would be created at the outset of an operation, but would not assume the lead from the COCOM until major combat operations are completed in a specific area.¹³²

¹³¹Ibid., 14.

¹³²N. Arnas, C. Barry, and R. B. Oakley, *Harnessing the Interagency for Complex Operations* (Washington DC: National Defense University 2005), 21.

A recent monograph written at SAMS by Maj. J. Fitzgerald, Canadian Armed Forces, is “The Canadian Strategic Advisory Team to Afghanistan: A Possible Model for a Multinational Whole of Government Approach to Defeating an Insurgency” (May 2009).

The purpose of the monograph is to explore the applicability of the model used by the Canadian Strategic Advisory Team to Afghanistan (SAT) as a potential model of a whole of government approach (WGA) applied in a multinational setting in order to defeat an insurgency. In the paragraph dedicated to the PRT Maj. Fitzgerald says that to be truly effective, the interagency coordination needs to exist at the ministerial/secretariat level of national government to provide not only clear policy guidance but also authority. It is from this ministerial level that there should be a connection to the receiving country to match the donor country’s policy with the host government’s needs.¹³³

Other documents reviewed are reports, conferences or survey on interagency processes. The transcripts of a forum held the 14th of April 2009 in Washington D.C., “Toward a new security framework: civil-military relations and interagency coordination”, are up to date. It concerned talking between representatives of different governmental agencies about the 3Ds approach to operations: diplomatic, development and defence tools.

The literature review has shown that detailed information is available from many different sources: military, civilian organizations, centers of studies. As a general

¹³³R.J. Fitzgerald, “The Canadian Strategic Advisory Team to Afghanistan: A Possible Model for a Multinational Whole of Government Approach to Defeating an Insurgency” (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth 2009), 23.

statement to describe an overall outcome, the documents try to address the interagency cooperation process at different levels because of the issues that in various ways and degrees have risen during the operations in Afghanistan.

In the next chapter the author will address the methodology used to search for the answers to the questions and the various sources used to support the thesis statement.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY.

The research methodology is to locate the work in the center of a multilayered circle. The closer the analysis gets to the centre, the more similar literature is to what this document intends to be. The research methodology incorporated reviews of pertinent literature, articles and works on websites, some personal experiences of the author and key leaders that operated in Afghanistan, lessons learned from the theatre: the analysis is focused in terms of the contemporary operational environment (ISAF-Afghanistan) to enhance its overall relevance and utility.

The starting point to evaluate the effectiveness of Interagency cooperation at PRT level is the US/NATO doctrine and the guidance that the Governments have given to their Departments in order to support the mission. The doctrine and the guidance is the ideal focal point from which to measure the gap between how things should work and how they actually work on the field.

The doctrine becomes the criteria from which to evaluate the gap between it and the current operations. The current operations analysis is based on Lessons learned, historic interviews and author's experience. The other documents written on the broad subjects of interagency cooperation or PRT in Afghanistan, serve as support to the answers the author has found.

There is no document so far which disagrees with lessons learned, experiences of the interviewed officers and those of the author

Going into a more detailed analysis on how answers have been sought, the research the author made is of qualitative kind and uses different kind of tools.

The lessons learned of military units and civilian components deployed under ISAF PRTs represent one of the core source of answers. In fact, coming directly from the primary actors on the field, the Lessons Learned (LL) is means to explain the need of a change. As a literature tool, the LL can be considered the most up-to-date sources of information because they are sent back home to institutions from the deployed elements of an agency on a periodic basis. They are also the most realistic document because they come from organizations that live on the field the day-to-day experience. The US military LL are generally written by the different PRTs in Afghanistan, approved by the chain of command and sent to the Center for Army Lessons Learned at Fort Leavenworth. The Centre has provided the author with a summary of the answers and the LL related to PRT and interagency cooperation: they are all approved LL and can be considered very good answers to the primary and secondary questions.

The second source of answers are the Oral History Interviews conducted with military Officers, Government officials and non-governmental organizations representatives that have recently had experiences with operations in Afghanistan and have dealt with Interagency cooperation issues at PRT level.

The third source of answers is the personal experience of the author who during an eight months deployment to Afghanistan as Regional Command-West Chief J9 (Civil-Military Cooperation) had to coordinate the operations of four PRTs of different nationalities. This experience has been posted in the Combined Arms Center blog with the title “The Interagency cooperation process in operation ISAF.

The fourth source is the articles, the surveys and the other documents which are written on interagency cooperation and PRT: they are related to Afghanistan and other

operational experiences and they have been published by important editors and support the general architecture of the these. Several of these have been written on general issues of interagency cooperation and civil-military cooperation. They contribute with interesting and articulated answers: they cover the Military perspective (mostly thesis of staff officers previously involved personally in those processes), NGO perspective (Save the children), USAID perspective and other Centers for strategic or international studies that can be considered points of reference in this analysis. The majority of the military authors that have addressed the issue, concentrate their efforts on evaluating the effectiveness of the PRT as a whole in support of the operations in Afghanistan, without a real focus on Interagency processes (we could consider the operations of the PRT themselves as a form of Interagency process) . Some other authors, typically members of international relations analysis centers, write about general considerations related to interagency processes and civil-military cooperation, without focusing on certain specific levels of war. There is no article, document or survey which specifically addresses the effectiveness of interagency coordination at the tactical level of a PRT in ISAF/OEF Operation. The majority of the works are written between 2005 and 2007.

In general the works previously completed in the field of this topic tend to answer questions related to the efficiency or effectiveness of the PRT as a whole, without exploring its internal mechanisms and the ways they operate. They do not describe the possible issues related to the interagency process or they cite them without going deeper into details. Moreover, with the speed that drives the news, the development of new strategies and the new approaches, some documents may be out of date. However, the works analyzed so far offer good points of view and very good referring quotes when in

need of building a new perspective or a new contribution. Some give excellent answers that can be used in support of personal experiences, interviews and lessons learned in the Findings and Analysis and in the Conclusions chapters. Some of these works give an interesting perspective of how the interagency process is working in Afghanistan with a civilian point of view, supporting at the same time the answers.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to determine if the interagency cooperation process at PRT level is affected by deficiencies that affect the operational effectiveness of the unit. This chapter analyzes the data collected and the processes used in conducting this research. This chapter is organized with a focus on the Oral History Interviews conducted by the author with subject matter experts, but also incorporates part of the Literature review and examines personal experience in Afghanistan, posted in the CAC blog.

Doctrine

One of the scopes of this work is to determine the main pillars of a PRT, its mission and organization, the components of a successful interagency cooperation and the responsibilities of each component. This question determines what interagency cooperation doctrine or guidance exists at PRT level within NATO and the US Joint Forces. The main source for information is the current Army and joint doctrine.

As indicated in the literature review, there are three reference documents used to describe the elements of a PRT and the components of Interagency cooperation: the Center of the Army Lessons Learned's PRT Playbook 07-34, the ISAF's PRT Handbook Edition 3, and the Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction, issued very recently by the United States Institute of Peace and the U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute.

The US Army's *PRT Playbook* describes the PRT as an "interim civil-military organization designed to operate in semi-permissive environments usually following open hostilities" which is intended to "improve stability in a given area by helping build the host nation's legitimacy and effectiveness in providing security to its citizens and delivering essential government services."¹³⁴ In other words the PRT is a mixed civil-military organization aimed at improving stability of an area by supporting the local government and developing a robust reconstruction and development effort. According to the Playbook, the organization of a PRT is variable, depending on several factors such as the lead nation's will, the security situation of the province, the operating area to cover, the level of local government, and the assessment of the essential services. The typical U.S. organization for a PRT, proposed by both the US Army *PRT Playbook* and the ISAF *Handbook*, has an average of 100 to 160 personnel: three or more are the civilians representing the State Department, USAID and the Department of Agriculture. The military component includes the PRT commander and his staff (including a Tactical Operations Center), a force protection unit (typically an infantry platoon of National Guard), two Army Civil Affairs teams (Alfa and Bravo), each with one Officer and three non-commissioned officers, a Civil-Military Operations Center, and several small units of military police, human intelligence officers and other specialists in logistics and contracting.¹³⁵ PRT leadership should constantly stress the unity of efforts, by all means available, in order to balance the civilian and military component and to harmonize and

¹³⁴Center for Army Lessons Learned, 1.

¹³⁵*Ibid.*, 56.

coordinate their operations.¹³⁶ In this way it is important to understand and employ consistently the different capacities of the component to ensure results and successes. Only by using all means, integrating the different contributions and coordinating their efforts with balance, the PRT will have effective interagency cooperation. The different guidance that the agencies receive from their parent bureaus needs to be synchronized with the current PRT operations. A tool to make the coordination more successful is a steering committee. It consists of a board with the main interagency actors who meet on a periodic basis to discuss common themes and increase communication flow.¹³⁷ This sort of command group has a consensual decision making process and will make the most important decisions, prioritize and plan future options.¹³⁸ In order to summarize the Playbook's recommendations for successful interagency cooperation, it is paramount that civilian and military representatives act fully integrated, coordinating activities to allow projects to benefit from each agency's contribution.

According to ISAF's Handbook, the PRT's mission statement is as follows: "Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) will assist the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to extend its authority, in order to facilitate the development of a stable and secure environment in the identified area of operations, and enable Security Sector Reform (SSR) and reconstruction efforts."¹³⁹ To achieve its objectives, the PRT has to use all

¹³⁶Ibid., 1.

¹³⁷Ibid., 22.

¹³⁸Ibid., 24.

¹³⁹ISAF PRT Handbook.

means of national power; military and diplomatic.¹⁴⁰ By mentioning all components of national power, the Handbook stresses that the interagency cooperation depends on all the different contributions. The proposed tool for the coordination is the integrated command group, already mentioned in the US Army PRT Playbook, which has to harmonize the different components and capabilities available. The leadership plays the primary role of the coordinating authority in a body that should base its decision making process on consensus building and shared information.¹⁴¹

The Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction does not address the mission and organization of a PRT. Instead, the publication describes mutual understanding as the main condition for successful cooperation. According to paragraph 1.5, the stabilizer (the military) needs to understand what the principles are for a sustainable development, while the development community (the civilians) need to understand how to apply conflict-sensitive approaches to Stabilization & Reconstruction environments.¹⁴² In other words, the two sides have to perform an effort of empathetic approach: empathy is defined as the “identification with and understanding of another's situation, feelings, and motives.”¹⁴³ It means that different agencies have to approach each other understanding the other's capacities, backgrounds, skills and ways of working. An empathetic approach is the basic ingredient for effective and productive cooperation.

¹⁴⁰ISAF, PRT Handbook, 1.

¹⁴¹Ibid.

¹⁴²United States Institute of Peace, U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Institute, 1.5.

¹⁴³The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 4th ed., Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000

Operational Effectiveness of PRT

Another scope of the thesis is to determine if deficiencies affect the operational effectiveness or the quality of PRT and in particular, how do these interagency cooperation deficiencies affect the PRT's main sectors and lines of activities. The last secondary question identifies possible corrections or solutions that may improve interagency cooperation. One source for answers is the non doctrinal portion of the literature review which engages interagency cooperation at PRT level. However, the main source of information in order to answer these questions is the oral history interviews obtained by the author from officials of the Department of State, Department of Defense, Non-profit organizations and International Military communities.

Robert Perito's Congressional testimony in October 2007, "The US Experience with Provincial Reconstruction Teams", provides interesting answers. He affirms that deficiencies exist and provides as an example the inability of the DoS to provide adequate quality and quantity of personnel to the PRTs. He clearly says that:

State Department has been able to fill its limited number of assigned slots, but has been forced to rely upon junior officers, retirees or civil servants, if not last minute hired contractors. Most USAID slots are filled with contract personnel who often have only a limited knowledge of their sponsoring agency and government regulations and requirements. Other U.S. civilian agencies have relied on random volunteers or have opted out entirely.¹⁴⁴

Moreover these people are frequently untrained and they try to improvise without skills and experience. Another deficiency Perito mentions is related to a broad cultural approach. As he says in the testimony, the PRTs have tried "to use development aid to neutralize local sources of conflict and to provide incentives for Afghans to oppose the

¹⁴⁴R. Perito, Congressional Testimony.

Taliban, without realizing that they operate in a larger humanitarian assistance universe.”¹⁴⁵ That means that the PRTs have focused too much on projects to help neutralize the Insurgency, without realizing that their plan must be coordinated with the larger national plan. He also suggests, pointing out another deficiency of the system, that the PRTs need a single chain of command with a new organizational structure: it is wrong to ask the military and the civilian agencies to agree about common operations at the tactical level without any guidance provided from the strategic level. Information operations should be a point of strength for the PRTs, but according to Perito, there is a lack of information sharing about the efforts and the results of these important units. The last mentioned deficiency is the absence of an “agreed set of objectives for PRTs and an agreed set of metrics for measuring their performance” in order to check for their effectiveness.¹⁴⁶

The delicate issue of absence of performance measuring is outlined by another document issued in 2004 by “Save the Children”, a British based NGO: “Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Humanitarian-Military Relations in Afghanistan”. Save the Children looks at the lack of performance measuring as a deficiency, because they think that the PRT lacks self-assessment capabilities, thereby not being able to tell if it is producing results. They also indicate that the PRTs have a complicated relationship with the other humanitarian agencies.¹⁴⁷ They explain this statement by saying that many locals and insurgents perceive the efforts of humanitarian agencies and those of the PRT

¹⁴⁵Ibid.

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

¹⁴⁷Save the Children, 41.

as coming from the same source. In this way the agencies become targets of the Insurgents that do not see them anymore as neutral partners or separated entities from the western governments. In addition to that the Humanitarian agencies think that the PRT way to deliver aids is militarized, sometimes unskilled (i.e. airdrops to field where mines can be) and inappropriate (delivering or realizing not what the people need).¹⁴⁸

The 2006 USAID document “Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan, an Interagency Assessment”, provides additional answers. Even after affirming that the PRTs are effective political-military structures, the assessment team found some deficiencies in the organization: mainly, the lack of explicit guidance led to confusion about civilian and military roles in the US-led PRT and the real coordination took place because of very proactive efforts of the military commander to incorporate non – DoD officials in the decision making process. As a solution, the team proposed that the interagency community should “develop guidance that clearly outlines the mission, roles, responsibilities, and authorities of each participating department or agency.”¹⁴⁹

In his paper, “Increasing Effectiveness of Interagency Provincial Reconstruction Teams,” US Army Colonel, John Koivisto provides a military perspective. Col Koivisto recognizes that the PRT suffers from several deficiencies: unsynchronized personnel rotations; inconsistent resourcing; and, finally, lack of detailed guidance on nationwide implementation of the provincial programs.¹⁵⁰ To support his statement, Col Koivisto cites Michael Mc Nierney, a US DoS official who affirmed that PRT mission statements

¹⁴⁸Ibid.

¹⁴⁹Morris, 13

¹⁵⁰Koivisto, 8.

were inconsistent, roles and responsibilities unclear and then that lack of ad hoc preparation and limited resources confused and kept away potential partners.¹⁵¹ In addition to this Koivisto cites again Mc Nerney when affirming that the civilians in the PRT were frequently junior level people compared to the military ranks and that they initially came only for a 90 days visit.¹⁵² These, according to Mc Nerney and to Koivisto, were the main interagency cooperation deficiencies.

“PRT: lessons and recommendations” published by Woodrow Wilson School in 2008 and supervised by Robert Perito, identifies the presence of a major deficiency in the PRTs: in fact the assessment outlines that PRT planning and organization may be impacted by lack of a standing institutionalized interagency organization or coordination in the country’s capital. Most importantly it analyses the situations of the different PRTs established by nations other than the U.S.: Canada, Germany, Italy, Lithuania and United Kingdom. The Canadian PRT of Kandahar has been handed over after the withdrawal of the forces. The German PRT of Konduz, the largest in Afghanistan, has a double-headed structure with civilian and military leadership: this has served as a catalyst, according to Annex B of the paper, for inter-ministerial cooperation in Germany. The Italian PRT in Herat initially experienced significant interagency coordination issues due to a lack of civilian planning and many lines of authority. However the government is attempting small and incremental steps to improve the integration at the ministerial level in Rome. The Lithuanian led multinational PRT is located in Ghowr and, according to Annex D,

¹⁵¹M. J. Mc Nerney, *PRTs in Afghanistan: Model or Muddle?* (Washington, DC: *Foreign Service Journal* 83, no. 3 (March 2006): 63.

¹⁵²*Ibid.*, 64.

suffered some bureaucratic barriers among the different agencies operating in it. The UK model, presented in Annex E, has strong interagency coordination which has been institutionalized in their Post Conflict Stabilization Unit. The Canadian PRT has redeployed.¹⁵³

The papers analyzed so far are references to assess the situation of interagency coordination at PRT level. Although the documents give interesting answers to the secondary questions, the oral history interviews are the main and more recent source of information the author uses. They give this paper an up to date perspective of the topic and raise insightful points on the status of PRTs.

During the writing of this thesis, the author interviewed seven individuals, who have dealt with PRTs in their career, mostly in Afghanistan. Three of them were military officials who worked in conjunction with PRT units: Major General Fausto Macor, Italian Army; Brigadier General William C. Hix, US Army; and Major Trever Nehls, US Army. Four individuals were civilians: Mr Kenneth Hillas, National War College; Ms Deanna Ms Gordon, USAID; Ms Michelle Fanzo, an NGO representative; and Ms Patricia De Gennaro, University of New York

The order of the interviews reflects a gradient of intensity. At the beginning the author has placed the interviews that are less critical to the effectiveness of interagency cooperation at PRT level. At the end the author placed the most critical interviews about the cooperation.

Major General Fausto Macor is an Italian Army officer with many years of experience in Command of units, both in national and NATO environments. The author

¹⁵³Perito, PRT: Lessons and Recommendations, Annexes

interviewed him at the beginning of January 2010. At the moment Major General Macor is the Military Advisor to the NATO Military Committee Chief, Admiral Giampaolo Di Paola, in Brussels. He led the NATO ISAF Regional Command West based in Camp Arena, Herat, between July 2007 and April 2008. In this position he served directly for the ISAF Commander. During this time he gained valuable experience in interagency related matters, commanding four PRTs from four different nations: Farah (US), Ghown (Lithuania), Qal ye Naw (Spain) and Herat (Italy). He visited numerous subordinate units, assessing the capability of the units and the operational environment in a very volatile area.

According to his interview, released in January 2010, the interagency cooperation at PRT level in RC-W was successful; the enablers were building ad-hoc interpersonal relations established at a tactical level in a situation marked by a lack of guidance from the higher levels. As a result, the integration of civil and military resources, the flexibility of the personnel involved and the experience of the subordinate senior leaders avoided that deficiencies or struggles at PRT level hampered the effectiveness of the operations; according to Macor, this was a result of improvisation. General Macor observed that deficiencies at higher levels did not affect the operational effectiveness of PRTs because of the personalities and the skills of the officials at the tactical level. These people at the tactical level worked together and achieved results in absence of a doctrine that could serve as guidance. In the same way, the management of the PRT was not affected by deficiencies even if civil and military officials reported to different chains of command: again this was because of the efforts, the common sense and the interpersonal skills of the decision makers “on the ground”. To him, the measures necessary to improve the

interagency cooperation at PRT level are related to training and preparation. In terms of organizational solutions he envisioned, during the interview, several actions to take. First there is a need to clearly and jointly define the common civil-military tasks. Second it is important to provide the Commander with adequate human and financial resources. Third it is necessary to train together civil and military personnel before the deployment in order to match the presence in theatre between the different components (civil and military “in and out together”). Fourth it’s mandatory to plan a common education, planning and study periods for operational/strategic level officials. These officials then should coordinate Interagency efforts from the Headquarters in home country.¹⁵⁴

Major Trever Nehls is a US Army Civil Affairs officer attending Command and General Staff Course in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, Class 10-01. He served in PRT Zabul, Regional Command South Area of Operations, between February and November 2008, as the Deputy PRT Commander. In an interview conducted on 23 March 2010, he affirms that the interagency cooperation process at PRT level has been absolutely successful. He also says that at this level, the process is very much personality driven. Nehls did encounter deficiencies; however, the ways the unit addresses and manages the issue makes the difference and get things done. It is inevitable that relationships between the military and the civilians are not perfect. The way the unit identifies the limitations, the deficiencies and the struggles, and builds trust in the interagency process, is more important.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴Fausto Macor, Major General Italian Army, Electronic interview by author, Ft Leavenworth, KS, 15 January 2010.

¹⁵⁵Trever Nehls, Major, interview by author, Ft Leavenworth, KS, 23 March 2010.

Information sharing is probably, according to Maj. Nehls, the real deficiency in a PRT. Every agency tends to consider information as confidential and this can hinder the process. Some information sharing is related to location and development of projects and is caused, according to Nehls, by USAID projects tracking system which has some deficiencies itself. Major Nehls strongly believes that the small deficiencies did not affect neither the operational effectiveness of the PRT, or the efficiency of the management.¹⁵⁶

To improve the cooperation, Nehls believes that there should be more civilians within the Afghan PRTs, specifically from the DoS and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). In particular the USDA did not have adequate financial resources: there is a need for a pot of money independently spendable by their officers. There are also no organizational or institutional solutions to solve the deficiencies; there is just the need of good education, team work capacities, and a deep understanding of interagency dynamics. As far as the “surge” in Afghanistan is concerned, the most important lesson learned Major Nehls pointed to is the need for at least one PRT in each province, in Regional Commands South and East Areas of Operation.¹⁵⁷

Ms Patricia De Gennaro is an advisor on international security, economic development and interagency cooperation. She is currently teaching at the Department of Politics of New York University and very recently started a contract with US Army Training and Doctrine Command for the G2 Intelligence office. Most of the work she is presently dealing with is interagency cooperation. She also recently worked for the President’s office. The author has interviewed her the 21 April 2010.

¹⁵⁶Ibid.

¹⁵⁷Ibid.

Ms De Gennaro affirmed that generally people do not cooperate easily in the interagency environment.¹⁵⁸ She recently visited three PRTs in Afghanistan: Panshir (US led), Bamiyan (New Zealand defense forces) and Mazar e Sharif (Sweden). She says that each PRT has constraints. In particular she saw some reluctance to accept civilian personnel in the Swedish PRT by the military structure. The USAID official was isolated from the rest of the unit.¹⁵⁹

The deficiencies she found were related to many different aspects. There were constraints in the freedom of movement for the civilian personnel who had to be escorted by military security. There were also some resource issues related to the allocation of money and the way the money was used. In fact the US military has the CERP money which has a very quick purchasing procedure. Conversely, USAID and DoS bureaucracies are more complex, so that the money gets allocated and authorized more slowly and through different channels. In this way, De Gennaro says, the deficiencies affect the operational effectiveness of the PRT. She explains that different resource allocation procedures and different allocation of security escorts make the PRT as a two speed structure, where the military go faster and the civilians are often left behind. Sometimes projects are not completed because they are framed and funded using different military and civilian sources: the parts that are up to the military are completed, the parts up to the civilians are not. Ironically, she said, the US Constitution gives the

¹⁵⁸Patricia De Gennaro, Telephone interview by the author, Ft Leavenworth, KS, 21 April 2010

¹⁵⁹Ibid.

lead to DoS in foreign affairs, followed by the military. In Afghanistan, she maintains that the opposite is happening.¹⁶⁰

Another deficiency De Gennaro points out is that in Afghanistan there are inexperienced and less qualified civilians, compared to the operations in Iraq. This undermines the credibility of the civilian component and reduces the impact and the importance it can have on PRT operations. De Gennaro supports her statement by identifying the Italian PRT in Dhi Qar (south eastern Iraq) as an example of excellent relationship and capacity to deal with the host nation. “The Italians –she said – work much better with the host country than the other nations.”¹⁶¹

Again comparing again Iraq to Afghanistan, it seems, she says, that the civilian component gets more support from the military chain of command at higher levels. In this way in Iraq USAID and DoS lead the majority of the projects that are developed. In Afghanistan, as De Gennaro said before, the civilian component seems to have a secondary role.¹⁶²

De Gennaro proposes some solutions, short and long term, in order to improve the interagency cooperation at PRT level. As far as the quick impact measures are concerned, she believes that the PRTs need a plan to operate in the context of the province where they reside. This will help frame the different components of the projects and of the activities, allocate them to the military or the civilian side and in this way find controversies and deficiencies in order to solve them. It is also very important, De

¹⁶⁰Ibid.

¹⁶¹Ibid.

¹⁶²Ibid.

Gennaro says, that each agency or component and their resources, gets aligned to the end state for the province, in order to implement and build a comprehensive development plan.¹⁶³

As far as long term measures are concerned, De Gennaro believes that the different allied nations participating to the reconstruction effort in Afghanistan need to talk to each other in order to define a common ground for policy. Resources should be aligned and shared and communication flow should be clearly established between different components, national and international, military and civilian. Finally De Gennaro strongly believes that the participation of Afghan authorities in the reconstruction and development process is compulsory. The local contribution is the most important element that will facilitate also the interagency cooperation process, relieving part of the responsibilities from the international assistance to the host nation.¹⁶⁴

Mr Kenneth M. Hillas is a Faculty Advisor at the National War College in Fort McNair, Washington, D.C. He served in PRTs in Iraq, but, due to his position in the U.S., he has developed a broad experience on interagency processes at tactical level. During the interview he gave on 6 April 2010, he pointed out some interesting points of discussion which can be tailored to any PRT and have an overall value.

Based on his experience, he believes that the interagency cooperation process at PRT level has been successful so far, even if problems still exist. The deficiencies are largely a result of personal and sometimes also bureaucratic factors. But in the end, given the overlap in responsibilities, the differing bureaucratic cultures and the differing

¹⁶³Ibid.

¹⁶⁴Ibid.

perspectives, according to Hillas, the cooperation was surprisingly good. The most important deficiency overall is that Information sharing is not always optimal. This deficiency, according to Hillas, does affect the operational effectiveness of the PRT, but does not affect the management of the unit.¹⁶⁵

Hillas affirms that there is no formal mechanism or measure for a joint civil-military authority to resolve differences within a PRT, although it is usually possible to either get the higher Headquarters to weigh in or to have the Embassy engage with the Theatre Command to obtain the proper guidance. To emphasize his statement he also adds that there probably is no “solution” to interagency conflict. These interagency issues, he believes, exist in Washington, so it is natural that they will exist in the field. The challenge is how to properly manage them. Sometimes, he continues, they can be resolved on a case by case basis, but there is “no way to build a firewall to avoid interagency conflicts.” Management of interagency conflict can be achieved through a variety of mechanisms, such as interagency training for PRT operations (which now occurs), a clear definition of roles and responsibility, selection of qualified and sufficiently experienced PRT personnel, and good communications.¹⁶⁶

Talking about the surge in Afghanistan as a way ahead for the future, Hillas says that the US needs to understand what the surge does “in connection with other factors” that contributed to the success in Iraq in stabilizing the situation. If the western countries do not properly understand, they will draw the wrong lessons. The lesson learned from

¹⁶⁵Kenneth M. Hillas, Electronic interview by the author, Ft Leavenworth, KS, 6 April 2010.

¹⁶⁶Ibid.

Iraq for Afghanistan is the need to switch from a transition strategy to a population security strategy with the forces more widely deployed and no longer concentrated in large Forward Operating Bases. Hillas differs with Joint Chief of Staff Chairman, Admiral Mullen who asserted that we are on the right road because we now have the “right leaders, right resources and right strategy” for Afghanistan. According to Hillas, it is just not correct to assume that the US will prevail based on the number of troops and resources thrown into the fight, although those are critical (but not sufficient) factors for achieving victory. Again, the right strategy, Hillas affirms, can work in this kind of conflict only if the US creates at least two conditions: a correct understanding of the conflict with an appropriate mission; a competent and capable partner in the host country government.¹⁶⁷

Mr Hillas has reservations on the first condition and does not believe that the second is at all attainable. In fact, Afghanistan has never had a strong central government, whether under the King, President Daoud, the communists or the Taliban. If the US sets their bar too high in Afghanistan, Hillas believes success will remain elusive.¹⁶⁸

Ms Michelle Fanzo is President and Founder of Four Corners Consulting Company. She served many times in Afghanistan between 2005 and 2009 as chief of the NGO ARZU. In this position, she had the opportunity to visit and work with PRTs Bamiyan (led by New Zealand Defense Forces), Mazar e Sharif (Swedish Forces) and Herat (Italian Forces). During her time in Afghanistan she was also a USAID grantee. She has worked also within the United Nations (UN), in the Department of Peacekeeping

¹⁶⁷Ibid.

¹⁶⁸Ibid.

Operations (2001), United Nations Development Programme (1998) and as a UN field officer in Nairobi (2000). She has extensive experience in cross-agency coordination roles.

In her interview, done on 23 March 2010, she brings the point of view of an NGO chief who has experienced the interagency coordination process at PRT level from an external perspective. Even if not having a strong opinion about each PRT's effectiveness, she affirms that the process has been successful so far, in a broad sense. The relationships and the deficiencies at PRT level were really based, she says, upon the different environments in which the PRTs operated. She did find Bamiyan and Herat very successful and receptive, while Mazar e Sharif was more affected by the deterioration of the security in its area of responsibility.¹⁶⁹

According to Ms Fanzo, the main limitation of the Interagency cooperation process at PRT level was the lack of national DoS personnel in non-US PRTs. Normally US DoS has representatives in the non-US PRTs, but they are not permanently assigned, hampering cooperation efforts. This situation, according to Fanzo, hampers continuity of efforts. The few civilians in the non-US PRTs were overworked and under resourced. Another limitation or deficiency was the military security support to the civil agencies that worked with or for the PRT. She affirmed that the security support to the civil agencies was sometimes the last priority of the military. This needs to change, making the civilian agencies more autonomous. They should be able to have a security asset to task in order to do their job with autonomy and not always have to rely on requests to the

¹⁶⁹Michelle Fanzo, Interview by the author, Ft Leavenworth, KS, 23 March 2010

military. Another limitation, according to Ms Fanzo, was the financial resource constraints. She thinks that the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) was a very important and positive opportunity for every agency, but she also believes that it did not work well for three main reasons. First, the lack of military/PRT interaction with local authorities, population, leaders, other agencies and United Nations (UN) before choosing to develop a project resulted in military leadership making project decisions without taking into account the needs of the local populace. Second, engineering and logistics mistakes were made due to incorrect terrain evaluations and the requirement for equipment from western countries instead of locally available equipment. The result was sustained inoperability of the machinery due to a lack of spare parts and the subsequent long delays to get them from overseas. In addition to this, if projects do not use local or regional machinery, materiel and manpower, they do not support the development of the area. Third because it is useless to spend a lot of money without understanding the local culture and the operational environment; the projects will not meet the needs of the populace and an aggressive military posture or combat dress may hamper or jeopardize in few minutes the work that has been done for months by the civil agencies.¹⁷⁰

Ms Fanzo identified potential measures or solutions to improve the interagency cooperation process at PRT level. From a short term standpoint, she believes that the agencies should be provided with better human resources in terms of technical expertise and security support. Moreover the military side of the PRT should receive better training on what the other agencies can offer and the expertise they can bring to the table. From a long term stand point, the lessons learned process among the PRTs should be

¹⁷⁰Ibid.

implemented with more information sharing. In particular, the PRTs should not report predominantly to their own countries. Instead NATO should establish a system that facilitates information sharing within Afghanistan.¹⁷¹

Brigadier General William C. Hix is the Deputy J7 (Training and Education) at the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington D.C. During his numerous deployments to Afghanistan he has served as PRT Commander and has dealt with the coordination of interagency efforts at tactical level. The author has interviewed General Hix in April 2010.

According to General Hix, the interagency cooperation process at PRT level has not been successful so far. He explains that by saying that the non-DoD agencies supporting PRTs in Afghanistan are under resourced in terms of manpower and funding. They often act at the direction of their parent agencies and in the case of non-US PRTs, act within national, rather than commonly agreed development priorities. According to Hix, this latter issue is improving, but is still inadequate. Finally, General Hix affirms, the “Afghan face” is not yet established and shown in the activities: most aid and assistance is administered directly by the PRT rather than through Afghan officials, undermining Afghan development and credibility and further limiting coherence of the develop program and the priorities of the Afghan government.¹⁷²

General Hix indicated that he encountered some deficiencies in the interagency process at PRT level. Often the civilian members of a PRT, were no more qualified than

¹⁷¹Ibid.

¹⁷²William C. Hix, Brigadier General, Electronic interview by author, Ft Leavenworth, KS, 10 April 2010.

the military members to advise the Afghans or make development decisions. In the same way, State Department personnel in particular did not see themselves as advisors for the PRT or the Afghani officials, but rather as reporting officers who provided political reporting to the US Embassy. USAID personnel, Hix continues, did have expertise but were limited by their few numbers and dependence on contractors and inability, often, to direct their funds and programs through the Afghan officials. There was no adequate program to develop local Afghan officials at the district, provincial or national levels. The human capital deficit in Afghanistan was huge, yet training and advising programs aimed at the civil sector were woefully inadequate. Moreover, Hix says, there was no program to either supplement civil sector salaries, as the Coalition did for the Afghan Army and Police, nor any advisor program to assist in their development on the job.¹⁷³

The major deficiency at PRT level in Afghanistan, according to General Hix, was the lack of unity of command, effort or control. As an example, General Hix identified that in Vietnam Civil Operation Rural Development Support (CORDS) teams were led by a civilian but had military deputies and vice versa--everyone worked for the team leader at each level--and all teams fell under the Command of the deputy commander for Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV)-CORDS--a civilian deputy commander with directive authority. In Afghanistan, instead, all decisions and plans are consensus efforts that often conform to Coalition, non-Afghan priorities. Additionally, a second major deficiency found by General Hix was that the lack of PRT presence below the provincial levels undermined province-wide development and action. He affirmed that these deficiencies affected the effectiveness of the PRT. Often, the conflicting priorities

¹⁷³Ibid.

and the inability to assist the provincial governor to deliver on popular expectations undermined the credibility of both the government and the PRT outside of the provincial capital. This situation created opportunities for the Taliban to denounce the government and the Coalition's inability to provide stability.¹⁷⁴

According to General Hix there are some solutions and potential measures to be taken in order to improve the interagency cooperation process at PRT level. First of all, directive control has to be established along the lines of the CORDS program at the district, provincial and national levels. This measure is absolutely necessary, according to Hix. Moreover there is a need for a NATO wide agreement on priorities and uniformed plans that focus on the Afghan's desires, not on European and US public opinion support or desires. In few words, General Hix believes that the long term, institutional solution is a Vietnam CORDS-like model that can go a long way along with common, Allied and Coalition-wide plans.¹⁷⁵

For the future Hix proposes some lessons learned which can significantly help the surge in Afghanistan. First of all, according to him, Security sector often becomes unsustainable in the absence of some form of reasonably effective government. The lack of effect at the district and provincial levels is most devastating to the credibility of the Afghan government and requires a program to establish functional connections from the central government to the provincial level and, importantly, the district level where government or its absence is most visible to the people. Such a program must include a comprehensive effort to identify, select, train, and husband viable civil and security leaders, pay them a living wage

¹⁷⁴Ibid.

¹⁷⁵Ibid.

and enable them through a government trust fund, advise them across all sectors – security, governance, and economics – with similar levels of effort, and organize them to take ownership of this conflict. To this end, an effective civil-military development/pacification program should be modeled on the successful 7,000 man Civil Operations Revolutionary Development Support civic action program in Vietnam.¹⁷⁶

To summarize, General Hix believes that the Governance sector has not been engaged enough, especially at the district level, which is not covered by any military unit. This level is paramount, because it links the community government with the Provincial one. He strongly supports more dedicated human resources to this pillar, which has to go in parallel with the Security sector. To him, the PRT should be modeled on the CORDS program, which was very successful in Vietnam.

Ms Deanna Ms Gordon is a USAID official with considerable international experience in the development sector. She served in PRT Ghazni in Afghanistan from May 2006 to April 2008, and spent the final year embedded with the US Special Forces in the south. The author interviewed her at the beginning of April 2010.

She did not believe that cooperation was working smoothly at the PRT level. The group she was part of was the first to have Navy and Air Force commanders who, especially the Navy ones, did not exhibit very strong teamwork skills, particularly in managing personnel other than military. With limited force protection resources, it was irrelevant, according to Ms Gordon, to have interagency meetings to determine priorities. In fact, the Commander “had final say on security matters, which could, and often was

¹⁷⁶Ibid.

used to cancel any mission that was not his own.”¹⁷⁷ Another issue, according to Miss Ms Gordon, was the incentive structure. At the time, PRT commanders were rewarded for “spending the most money in the most visible manner and no attempt was made to measure security or governance improvements that could have been attributed to these projects.”¹⁷⁸ The PRTs that did the best with cooperation were those with standardized methods of cooperation that were established when the US Army still held PRT commands. Miss Ms Gordon also encountered some struggles and limitations during her experience in Afghanistan. She felt that many of the armed forces officers did not completely understand the mission or why civilians should be part of it. She now thinks this may have improved over time as more training is available and USAID does a better job of explaining their capacities. She remembers that after a presentation she gave for the new group arriving in Ghazni, despite it having received interagency training, it “was stunned to learn that USAID spends billions of dollars a year in Afghanistan alone.”¹⁷⁹ They believed the few million USAID spent at the provincial level was the whole story. They also had some lack of understanding (and occasional hostility, finding out that they were not the big player in terms of reconstruction resources, Ms Gordon said) which significantly impeded USAID work, as the military leaders “did not appreciate the leverage available through the resources the agency could make available.”¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷Deanna Gordon, Electronic interview by the author, Ft Leavenworth, KS, 10 April 2010

¹⁷⁸Ibid.

¹⁷⁹Ibid.

¹⁸⁰Ibid.

Ms Gordon believed that a more unified strategy or sense of purpose at the Regional command level is required because it would provide guidance for PRT activities. During her experience in Ghazni she says she never had a written strategy which would have been “critical to planning missions and to making optimal use of the resources available.” For reasons Ms Gordon has not yet understood, and maybe because they were working outside of their natural jobs, many Navy and Air Force commanders seemed to see information sharing as a competition, so for example resources and expertise from other PRT members were not valued. According to Ms Gordon, some deficiencies hampered a good process. Some officers did not understand the mission and many civilians were there to get their “war zone service out of the way.”¹⁸¹ As an example, she says that problems arose from those that either did not know or did not care what success meant in that environment. On the military side, many of the soldiers were not thrilled with being assigned to the PRT and just wanted to get their year done.¹⁸² Another deficiency according to Ms Ms Gordon was the exceptionally poor leadership from the commander. Due to his lack of experience, the Commander had no idea of the need “to invest time and energy in relationship building” in that environment before start asking “sensitive questions and expecting cooperation”, Ms Gordon specifically affirmed.¹⁸³ This situation did little to support civilian efforts at doing stabilization and reconstruction in ways that did not exacerbate problems in areas with tense tribal relations. Despite visits from the Ambassador and Regional Commander of Eastern front,

¹⁸¹Ibid.

¹⁸²Ibid.

¹⁸³Ibid.

leadership did not improve. As a result, these deficiencies affected the operational effectiveness of the PRT. Inputs from very experienced people in sectors like intelligence and mission planning, were disregarded, causing incidents that stopped missions for months to check the status of projects.¹⁸⁴

According to Ms Gordon, these deficiencies also affected the efficiency of the PRT management. The process was inefficient because the main incentive given to the military at that point was to spend money. Due to his in-experience, the Commander had no idea of the need “to invest time and energy in relationship building” in that environment before start asking “sensitive questions and expecting cooperation”. Overall, she believed that the main deficiencies were related to ill motivated personnel (civilian and military sides), poor leadership skills of sister service commanders (assessed by superiors and national civil authorities), and lack of an underlying strategy.¹⁸⁵

In terms of potential measures to improve the interagency cooperation process at PRT level, Ms Gordon thought that the main efforts should be focused on selecting the right Commanders and key personnel who are suited to the mission. According to Ms Gordon, despite adequate training, a bad commander or a bad civilian representative can do a lot of damage.¹⁸⁶ During her deployment, leadership’s response to this issue was to increase training. While training is helpful, according to Ms Gordon it is more critical to hire staff or appoint commanders that are demonstrated team-players. What is needed to have an effective PRT are “subject matter experts and a whole bunch of people who

¹⁸⁴Ibid.

¹⁸⁵Ibid.

¹⁸⁶Ibid.

know how to work as a team.”¹⁸⁷ One other suggestion she made was to maintain subject matter experts in justice, finance and business development sectors at the regional commands to be called upon when needed. It was also important for each PRT to have an agricultural advisor and a rural development expert with an understanding of conflict environments. Ms Gordon thinks they are “invaluable to the mission.”¹⁸⁸ Another measure to improve Interagency is to ban people who are very protective of what they perceive as “their projects”. This approach is ineffective at best in the PRT environment. Leadership (civilian or military) must be willing to make use of all resources available on the team. She found that previous military experience is not a necessary requirement for civilians. Sometimes, Ms Gordon says, people who had very little development knowledge were hired because they had military experience resulting in some disastrous projects, exactly the kinds of things development advisors are supposed to prevent.¹⁸⁹

As far as organizational or institutional solutions are concerned to solve the issues, she thinks that a clear strategy and message from high level leadership is critical. In fact, according to Ms Gordon, one of the most effective PRTs was one that had a clear process in place for project approvals. The process required the input of the entire interagency team, but no one had veto power. The process itself ensured that discussions took place, efforts were coordinated, and that the expertise in place was at the very least heard, if not always made use of.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷Ibid.

¹⁸⁸Ibid.

¹⁸⁹Ibid.

¹⁹⁰Ibid.

Based on her experience, Ms Gordon delineates lessons learned for the ongoing surge in Afghanistan. She believes that PRTs were originally intended to be small, mobile teams, capable of responding wherever needed. They have grown unwieldy over time and are for the most part not able to respond quickly. Ms Gordon proposes a model that incorporates different levels of teams. The model she saw work best was civilians attached to Special Forces teams, who are by definition able to respond rapidly to changing situations. Ms Gordon was attached to a Task Force and joined up with teams when their missions matched up with hers. She would not attach a civilian to an individual team because much of what they do is combat-focused. Many of the most effective PRT reps she knew were people who developed relationships with all the elements on their bases and linked up with their missions when they needed to get somewhere.¹⁹¹

Another lesson learned is to keep the PRTs and have them work on provincial level issues such as governance, developing provincial plans and attaching civilians to smaller units. Doing so provides them the flexibility, subject to security issues, to establish relationships outside of their defined units to help them get their work done. This of course necessitates very careful hiring as it is easy to end up with people with more interest in associating with Special Forces than their development job.¹⁹²

A third lesson learned, according to Ms Gordon, is that many PRTs stay in and around their capitals, where there is much important work to be done, but which does not increase legitimacy of the government in more remote areas. It is essential to expand the

¹⁹¹Ibid.

¹⁹²Ibid.

program, without limiting it to the provincial level. The more the local populace sees civilians, the better. Ms Gordon says that having women on the ground has the added advantage of allowing for conversations that otherwise would never happen. She indicated that it is a well known development truth that women know what their communities need and resources given to them are far more likely to be spent on food, education, and other family essentials.¹⁹³

Her fourth lesson is to train both civilians and military to build relationships with communities and their leaders to ensure better understand situational awareness. She had years of field work experience collecting often sensitive information and she would have found the job much more challenging without that knowledge and experience to draw upon. When insurgents are building up, moving around, or moving supplies, Ms Gordon says, they are generally not doing it in provincial capitals. This is not intended by Ms Gordon to suggest treating PRTs or civil-military teams as intelligence collection units. However, one of their important roles, which is often overlooked, is that they are the eyes and ears on the ground for their agencies and that the mission goes beyond spending money on small projects. Stand alone projects that are not used as a way to build relationships with communities and that are not given any public relations attention, Ms Gordon says, are of limited use.¹⁹⁴

Blogs are also an important source to get and share up to date information. They provide insights and indications from the people that have a direct experience on the analyzed topic.

¹⁹³Ibid.

¹⁹⁴Ibid.

The author's own blog on the Combined Arms Center website is entitled "Interagency cooperation at PRT level in Afghanistan" (hereafter referred to as PRT blog), and details his experiences with this topic. He made a deployment in Afghanistan between July 2007 and January 2008 as Chief J9 (Civil-Military Operations) at Regional Command West (RC-W) in Herat.¹⁹⁵ RC-W is the Italian led Regional headquarters under the NATO operation International Security Assistance Force. During the deployment the author was responsible for coordinating four different PRTs (Herat, Farah, Qal ye Now and Chagcharan) from four different nationalities (respectively Italy, US, Spain, Lithuania). He experienced how difficult the coordination of different agencies in a joint and multinational environment is.

The Italian PRT had a national structure of 150-200 individuals, with a military Commander (Italian Army O-6) and a civilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs participation. The Italian DoS works on different long term projects. The coordination between the civilian and the military components used to take place in a monthly meeting hosted by the PRT Commander.

The US led PRT in Farah had a strong structure with about 160 people. The majority of them were military, but there was a DoS representative, a couple of USAID personnel and some contractors. They were all co-located in the PRT and coordinated with the Civil Affairs teams, the PRT's S9 and the Civil-Military Operations Center. The PRT Commander was a US Navy O-5. The interagency relationships at the time were very good, according to the author, and the coordination was smooth and effective. The

¹⁹⁵U.S. Army, CAC, http://usacac.army.mil/blog/blogs/cgsc_student_blog/archive/2010/02/11/prt-interagency-cooperation-in-afghanistan.aspx (accessed 24 March 2010).

Civil Affairs teams worked more on quick impact projects, while USAID was more concentrated on developmental, medium-long term initiatives. PRT Farah was able to support ongoing military operations of RC-W in their Area of Operations with a robust and well coordinated Inter-agency developmental plan. They started projects, performed key leaders' engagement, and facilitated the presence of a religious authority in Bala Baluk district. It was the PRT with the most redundancy of human resources and was also very well integrated with the local authorities.

The Spanish PRT, according to the author's experience, was an example of very well coordinated national Inter-agency effort. The majority of the money was in the hands of the civilian officials. The military teams were tasked to assess the territory, find out proper methods to address the needs of the population, and to support the ongoing military operations with civil affairs activities. The civilian and military entities were co-located in the PRT and worked jointly on a daily basis. It enjoyed excellent interagency cooperation based on pre-deployment team-building and common ground personalities both in the military and the civilian side.¹⁹⁶

According to the author's experience, the Lithuanian PRT had a very complex structure. The military side was composed mainly of Lithuanian personnel, with some Croatians and Norwegians. The civilian side had an Icelandic presence with some other members from Lithuania and Croatia. The PRT was at the same time an Interagency and Multinational unit. It was an example of great personal effort, but also friction that occurred between the two sides, military and civilian, which created a bit of tension and reduced the effectiveness of the unit. Despite being underfunded, they performed some

¹⁹⁶Ibid.

Quick Impact Projects that were very useful for the local needs and tailored to the will of the population.¹⁹⁷

Generally speaking, the author experienced some issues with regards to interagency cooperation at the PRT level in Afghanistan. The first was related to the multinational nature of the operation. The PRTs are led by different nations with different resources available: as a result, they are affected by the quantity of money they receive from their own countries. This situation created disparities and also affected the development of the provinces, enhancing the differences and impeding a balanced growth. NATO doesn't have a unique source of funds to distribute to the PRTs. There is no unified funding flow for the projects with decision makers along the chain of command, as in MNC Iraq. Because of this, the development of a Province depended, at the time of the author's experience, upon the money that the PRT's leading nation was able to provide, drawn from its national budget, its possibilities and availability of finances.¹⁹⁸

A second issue that the author faced was that the effectiveness of interagency cooperation at PRT level in Afghanistan depended on the personal efforts that the individuals put in place to work together. If relationships between the civil and the military component were affected by prejudices, bias and rigid "own way to do business", the interagency coordination became more difficult and the subsequent long processes to get results were a waste of time. The processes are not regulated at this level by doctrine or specific rules; the agencies involved in a PRT report to their chain of

¹⁹⁷Ibid.

¹⁹⁸Ibid.

command so that their coordination is a matter of common sense owned by the different representatives and the coordinating capacity of the PRT Commander.¹⁹⁹

Some multinational issues were also part of the problem. DoS representatives were present in almost all the PRTs, but they did find it more difficult to coordinate with non-US PRT Commanders. Experience showed the author that sometimes they just left or kept going with their own personal agendas, which often differed from the agenda of the PRT's lead nation.²⁰⁰

Another issue in the author's experience was represented by the different cycles and deployment timelines between military units and civilian teams. They normally did not get in theatre together and they also left at different times. In this way, the interpersonal relations built during the months spent together were dissipated when one element left the area of operations. There are possible solutions to this issue, according to the author. One could be the establishment of a joint pre-deployment training for the unit that is going to run the PRT and the civilian representatives that will work in conjunction. This will help to ice-break the initial gap and make the relationships stronger at the beginning of the operations in theatre.²⁰¹

From the author's perspective and because of the experience he had in Afghanistan as Chief J9 RC-W, the interagency coordination at PRT level was at the time

¹⁹⁹Ibid.

²⁰⁰Ibid.

²⁰¹Ibid.

a matter of leadership capabilities, interpersonal skills and proficiency in influential behaviors of the key players.²⁰²

In 1986, the US Congress approved what became known as the Goldwater-Nichols Act. This law forced the US Armed Forces to plan and conduct operations jointly. The overall solution for interagency cooperation could be a sort of Goldwater-Nichols Act that, starting as reference legislation for the US interagency efforts, can become also a model for the other NATO countries. But according to him, the legislative solution seems very far from being chosen.²⁰³

This is why the author, in a second comment on the same blog, posted the 22 February 2010, affirms that “the rules of cooperation cannot be fixed as a doctrinal statement or straightly indicated as means of success.”²⁰⁴ However, in his experience during combat operations, he observed that interpersonal skills such as empathy, team work, capacity of listening, communication, candor, open mind and humility, tended to be successful elements. If used, according to the author, with intelligence, an assertive approach and common sense, they increase the possibility of an effective and successful interagency coordination.²⁰⁵

A few days later, on 26 February 2010, Captain Jackson Irish, US Army, posted a very interesting comment. He served in a PRT in RC-E Area of Operations in 2009 and provided a very up to date contribution to this work. He affirmed that the pre-deployment

²⁰²Ibid.

²⁰³Ibid.

²⁰⁴Ibid.

²⁰⁵Ibid.

training done when the PRT is first brought together now takes into account the importance of the interagency amalgam. Many of the civilian governmental representatives that were going to join the PRT performed training with the team prior to deployment. They participated during the Field Training Exercise held the final week of training of the unit. He said that the only issue was a late participation of the USDA representative because of previous struggles between him and some military personnel pertaining to the unit. This brings again to the table the impact of personality and human relationship in the effectiveness of interagency work at PRT level. However, the PRT, according to Capt Irish, was able to “instantly incorporate him into the team and support his mission almost immediately upon his arrival.”²⁰⁶ According to Irish, it should be always this way, given a prior working relationship or not, but the reality of the situation is not always such. With the complexity of the PRT mission, he affirms, any lessons PRT operators can learn from those who have served before, will be a great asset as NATO continues to assist in the reconstruction of Afghanistan.²⁰⁷

Do Deficiencies in Interagency Cooperation Process at PRT Exist?

The main scope of the work is to determine if deficiencies in the interagency cooperation process really exist at the PRT level. The answer to this question is a synthesis of the pertinent literature, the interviews the author made and that were previously developed, and the blog posted on the Combined Arms Center website.

²⁰⁶Ibid.

²⁰⁷Ibid.

All sources of information concur that deficiencies do exist in the interagency cooperation process at PRT level. The pertinent literature, the Oral History Interviews and the posts on the blog contain many elements that support this thesis.

One of the most important deficiencies is the lack of adequately resourced, trained and experienced personnel that the DoS is providing to the PRTs in Afghanistan. This deficiency is mentioned by Robert Perito in the Congressional Testimony previously mentioned, Patricia De Gennaro, Brigadier General Hix and Ms Fanzo in their interviews. They all agree on the fact that the civilian organizations and components - mainly DoS and USAID - of the PRT are sometimes inadequate in terms of quantity of personnel, experience, training, technical and professional skills, interpersonal relationship and team working abilities. This lack in the personnel component makes it harder for the civilian component to have an active, effective and positive role in the interagency cooperation process at PRT level.

Another important common deficiency is the lack of information sharing between the two different components, military and civilian. It is mentioned by Ms Gordon, Fanzo and Nehls in their interviews. According to them the information is managed as if it were confidential by the different components. It appears to be a competition of who gets the most valuable information and how the component is able to manage it for its organizational advantage, instead of the common goal of the PRT.

Almost all sources recognized that there is a lack of unified interagency guidance from the top of the organizations. As a result, unity of effort is a struggle and consequently may affect the operational effectiveness of the PRTs. In absence of a unified guidance, the leadership of the PRT has to come up with interim team building

and team working solutions which are based on the goodwill of the personnel, their common sense and intelligence. The issues arise when the leadership is not able to get the different components to work together or when the interpersonal relationship struggle results in biases, prejudices and openly manifested hostilities. These issues can be managed with the discipline in a military unit. However, in a PRT these misunderstandings have to be faced with negotiation ability, a tactful approach and mutual respect.

Nehls, Fanzo, De Gennaro, Hillas, Hix and Zuzzi believe that different levels and quantities of financial resources and different bureaucratic organizations are another major deficiency. There are many aspects to frame in this issue. First of all, the different allied nations allocate their funds to their PRT for reconstruction related projects. However, not every nation has the same amount of funds to assign. This means that there are in-equalities between the growth of different provinces because of the different budgets available to the PRTs. The second aspect of this issue is that even if the funds come from the same nation, they can be allocated to the military or to the civilian components. In the same way, the different components of the PRT may have different amount of funds available. In this way, the contribution of the different components to the overall PRT operational achievements becomes a two speed process. The third aspect of the issue is related to the different bureaucracies that regulate the components of the PRT. The civilian regulations make the funding process very slow, while the military can use the Emergency Response Funds (CERP) which is easily and rapidly available for quick impact activities. Again there is a sort of two speed process, which hampers a smooth interagency cooperation and makes the civilian component slower and less

competitive with regards to the military. The second aspect is due to amount of funds, the third aspect is due to different bureaucracies and regulations.

Ms Gordon, Fanzo and De Gennaro, the civilian component of the interviews block, believe that there are other two deficiencies in the military side. First is the lack of military security support to the civilian agencies. They agree on the fact that the civilian component is not a priority when assigning security assets of the PRT to the different teams. In this way days or weeks pass by before a USAID or other agency's official can get off post to verify the progress of the work on his projects. The second deficiency in the military side, according to their experiences, is the lack of preparation, training and insight of local cultural aspects. The posture and the military dress code sometimes negatively affect the perception of the local population on the international presence. The military "modus operandi", according to Fanzo, sends a message that can be misunderstood and convey bad feelings to the local population.²⁰⁸

Finally, it is a common opinion between interviewees with deployment experience, like Macor and Hix, and some literature review (Koivisto), that the different training cycles and deployment periods of the military and civilian components of the PRTs negatively affect the operations. Macor and Hix concur that pre-deployment team building and equivalent deployment times are necessary to form a cohesive and trained unit. Different deployments and training cycles do not allow the PRT to build mutual trust. As a consequence of this deficiency, the team has to develop team-building stages in the theatre of operation, instead of getting to the field as a trained and cohesive unit.

²⁰⁸Fanzo.

The aim of this chapter was to answer the research questions using data collected through literature review and oral history interviews given by subject matter experts and government officials with experience in the field. In the next chapter the author will delineate the conclusions and the recommendations of the study to include an understanding of the issues arisen, possible solutions and possible future areas of research and analysis.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The previous chapter identified the deficiencies present in the interagency cooperation process at PRT level. On a broad perspective, the outcomes of chapter 4 can be grouped and further synthesized here in the conclusions. The elements indicated by the literature and the interviewees are related to three macro areas related to the three different levels of war.

The first macro area identified, groups the deficiencies that can be related to interpersonal and human relationship, which happens at the very tactical level. These type of struggles involve most behavioral, psychological and communication aspects. They are affected by the inherent nature of the operational environment in combat areas, which is characterized, as previously affirmed, as volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. These elements make the environment more difficult to understand, more dangerous, and require more assumptions and variables. Predicting or simply trying to shape or foresee a situation or a result is very difficult and complicated. These elements, with their inherent uncertainty, provoke the growth of frustration in the human mind. This frustration is embodied by the competition between different components and the misunderstandings of human relationship, which contributes to the creation of social and organizational friction in the PRT. It happens within cohesive military units, civilian institutions and the most traditional and amalgamated social groups. In this way it is enhanced in a PRT, where the differences between the different components are based on clothing (uniforms for the military versus casual for the civilians), mindsets, ways of doing business,

educational background, habits and experiences. The leadership plays a significant role in dealing with these types of deficiencies or struggles. The Commander, based on his personality and experience, can affect the climate of the unit by creating a positive environment, promoting mutual trust, and getting people to work together. There is no doctrinal solution other than to use all elements of leadership in order to build an effective organization. One other solution for these types of deficiencies is to promote pre-deployment Interagency training for the components of the PRT. This would allow the different officials to know each other, create mutual trust, and to start building relationships before the unit has to become effective and perform mission activities.

The second macro area identified, groups the deficiencies related to responsibilities or actions along the chain of command at tactical and operational levels. These deficiencies are related to the guidance that each agency or component within the PRT receives from their parent headquarters. In fact, some of the issues raised by the interviewees were related to a lack of unity of effort between different agencies of the PRT, insufficient security support of the military component to the civilian component, and the different training cycles and deployment extensions of the PRT personnel. These deficiencies are not inherent to the unit, but depend on if and how the different agencies involved in the PRT talk to each other at the intermediate levels of their chain of command. They are organizational deficiencies, because they involve allocation of resources and personnel, directives on training, operating guidance and doctrine, and management of facilities. Coordination at this level is paramount in order to achieve a complete and effective unity of efforts at the tactical level. In few words, if deficiencies take place at this stage or at this level, the consequences are reflected in the effectiveness

of the PRT. However, the PRT leadership does not have, at its level, the tools to solve these issues and so struggles without having the chance to fix the problem. In this case, the possible solution is a better coordination between the agencies at operational level, in order to fix resource and organization related issues and provide the tactical units coordinated interagency components.

The third macro area identified, groups the issues related to the strategic level. There are two aspects of these deficiencies. The first is a multinational aspect which deals with the deficiencies caused by lack of coordination, funding policies and unity of efforts between the different contributing nations of the NATO Alliance in Afghanistan. In this case there is a need for better coordinated multinational initiatives and a NATO unified funds source that equally distributes resources to different PRTs of different nations. This solution will help avoid disparate development at different zones, because the PRT's leading nation provides fewer resources. The second aspect is basically US national and deals with the relationship between the Departments and agencies, which are sometimes not well coordinated already at the strategic level in DC. The solution to this deficiency may be legislative. There could be the need of a detailed Act, not just a directive, which forces the different agencies and Departments to work together and integrate in joint operations overseas. However, this solution may provide a Constitutional challenge because of the relationship between the Executive and Legislative branches: in this case, the Legislative branch would direct cooperation within the Executive branch. However, the purpose of this work is to identify a solution for this issue, and not to provide a legal advice on how to build a norm to solve the deficiency.

As far as the first area is concerned, at the very tactical level, the human component is very important. PRTs are not only military units, but a combination of components that require more than discipline, cohesion and training. It requires a soft approach to issues. Individuals working for a PRT have to be chosen because of their communication and interpersonal skills, team working capacities, flexible minds, smartness and character. Commanders have to be selected because of their negotiation skills, consensus building capacities, previous experiences in command of units with different personnel, communication and influential skills. Commanders then have to establish a positive and healthy climate within the unit, promoting open communication, mutual trust and respect, building relationship beyond and outside the chain of command, creating and developing a learning organization.

As far as the organizational/operational issues of the second area are concerned, the author recommends that the intermediate level offices of the departments and agencies involved issue directives and regulatory papers to drive a better coordination. The organizational level plays a significant role because it links the strategic with the tactical. It can issue directives and regulatory forms that contribute to the cooperation at PRT level and make significantly easier the efforts of the Commanders and officials on the field. The coordination can be also achieved by bilateral talks and agreements between the different agencies. They have to concur on common guidance, integrated ways and unity of efforts.

As far as the strategic issues of the third area are concerned, the author recommends that the national level opts for a legislative initiative on broad interagency cooperation which forces the different components of national power to work jointly in

overseas operations as well as in the continental US. This broad initiative will positively affect the PRT level, solving many of the deficiencies the author has described in this work. This Act could potentially define roles, responsibilities and essential tasks of the different components acting in the interagency arena. In this way it could give clarity and wipe away the doubts, misconceptions and misunderstandings related to the “who does what”. It could also unify procedures and “modi operandi” for resources and personnel management, which would then be very helpful at the tactical level, in the environment of an overseas operation.

Recommendations for Further Research

Finally this study has produced four recommendations related to further areas of interest and investigation centered among PRTs. The author believes there are few areas that require further analysis and development. First of all it is important to explore which measures can be taken in order to improve the interagency cooperation at multinational level in an operation like ISAF. How can the Alliance build a unique resources source to fund equally the different PRTs of the different nations? How can ISAF improve the coordination and exchanges of different PRTs belonging to different nations? Which coordinating measures can be taken in order to maximize the effectiveness of multinational-interagency coordination?

Second it is important to explore how to structure a hypothetical interagency cooperation initiative that coordinates the different elements of national power of the United States. The focus has to be how to force cooperation of different agencies. Has it to be a legislative or an executive directive? Which departments and agencies should be

involved in the process of drafting the act? Is there a need to involve the President's office in order to drive the draft of the act?

Third it is important to identify the best training for joint-interagency units like the PRT. The training should identify tailored and dedicated exercises, progression and evaluation. What are the main areas to cover in order to develop a joint-interagency training for deployable PRTs? How should the different components be trained? When should the different components be amalgamated for the combined training?

Fourth it may be interesting to investigate the US Embassy role in these overseas operations, its coordinating role and authority, the guidance it can provide to interagency elements. What is the role of US Embassy in Kabul? How are the different components of the country team coordinating their respective agencies?

Fifth it may be interesting to investigate the budget allocated to the DoS and the amount planned for reconstruction and development activities in the areas of operations. How much money did the DoS get for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 for reconstruction and development related initiatives? Is it comparable to the budget that the DoD got for the same FY?

Finally, another important area for further research, even if not related to interagency cooperation, is the geographical coverage of the PRTs. Brigadier General Hix and Ms Ms Gordon indicated in their interviews that the PRTs do not cover the district level, which is the intermediate institution between the local communities represented by the villages, and the provincial governments with the national representatives and ministerial offices. This gap, according to Brigadier General Hix, undermines a province wide development and action. It results in opportunities created

for the insurgency to denounce the Coalition's inability to provide stability and the lack of the Afghan face. As Ms Gordon says in her interview, "there may be a need to increase legitimacy of the government in more remote areas, expanding the program to district and community level and incorporating in the PRTs different levels of teams."²⁰⁹ In this way the PRT could have a more significant presence in the territory, involving more actively the Afghan population and authorities, and promoting capillary development and stability.

²⁰⁹Gordon.

APPENDIX A

Provincial Reconstruction Team Locations in Afghanistan



Source: International Security Assistance Force, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Security_Assistance_Force (accessed 21 May 2010).

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